

THE
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

MAY 1890.

THE BURNT MILLION.

BY JAMES PAYN,

AUTHOR OF 'BY PROXY,' ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER XLIV.

DIFFICULTIES.

THAT nothing happens for certain except the unexpected is a dogma that all of us have to subscribe to. It is proved in small matters as well as in large ones, alike in the case of those who have dramatic experiences, or who lead homely and uneventful lives. The inmates of Halswater Hall were no exception to this rule. After the painful scenes and violent quarrels that had lately taken place among them, it would have hardly seemed possible that a week, far less a month, hence would have found them all living together under the same roof, and, outwardly at least, in the same fashion as before. Yet so it was. The result was brought about by the dangerous illness of Grace Tremenhare. When, after her interview with Mr. Roscoe, her sisters, alarmed by her absence from the family circle, went to her room, they found her, as has been said, in sad case, and when the doctor arrived he gave a most serious report of her.

'Your sister,' he said, 'is suffering from the effect of some severe shock to her system. I do not wish to be intrusive, but it is absolutely necessary for the proper treatment of her case that I should know what has happened.'

Dr. Gardner (as he was always called, though he was only a general practitioner) was by no means of the ordinary type of

country doctor. He had an independence of his own, and practised medicine because he liked it. He was highly esteemed in the county, and, what is very rare with men of his profession, was on the bench of magistrates. It is probable that Mr. Roscoe would not have sent for him if the services of a more pliant practitioner could have been procured on equally short notice, but there was no time to pick and choose. Moreover, it was not Mr. Roscoe, but the two ladies, to whom he was addressing himself. His countenance, a fine florid one, looked so grave behind his moon-shaped spectacles, that they did not venture to deny the conclusion to which his professional observation had led him. Philippa indeed was so frightened that if she had been alone she would probably have given him every detail; but when the two sisters were together the elder was always the speaker.

'The engagement between my sister and Mr. Sinclair, of which you have doubtless heard,' said Agnes, 'has been suddenly broken off.'

'Oh! that's it, is it?' said the Doctor. 'Um! ha! And not, I suppose, by the young lady's own desire?'

'Yes; the disruption is her own act entirely. It is in no respect a family arrangement, if you mean that,' was the brusque reply.

'Nay, I meant nothing of the kind, madam, but only to get at the facts,' returned the Doctor dryly. 'I may take it, I suppose, that her determination, however necessary and unrepented of, has given her pain?'

'No doubt,' exclaimed Philippa, glancing with tearful eyes towards the bed, where Grace was lying with flushed cheeks and wandering speech, 'that is what has done the mischief.'

'To minister to a mind diseased is beyond my skill, Miss Philippa,' observed the doctor gently, 'but we must do what we can.' He wrote out certain prescriptions, and then said, 'I will send Miss Grace a good nurse.'

'My sister and I are surely the proper persons to attend upon her,' observed Agnes.

'No. Relations are too sympathetic. In a case like this it is most important that there should be nothing to excite the patient. She will be here to-night. I will pay an early visit to-morrow morning.'

There was only one way, it was said in Westmoreland, of evading Dr. Gardner's prescriptions—by dismissal, and Miss

Agnes was not prepared to go that length. She noticed, however, with great displeasure that for the future he preferred to address himself, when giving orders about his patient, to Philippa instead of herself; and though she had had no idea in her mind other than a kind one in preferring to nurse Grace with her own hands, the Doctor's refusal of her request made Richard's wild accusations especially hateful to her.

'That woman's as hard as nails,' was the Doctor's reflection as he rode away. 'My objecting to her tending the poor girl because she was too sympathetic was a good one,' by which, as he rolled his head and winked his eye in evident enjoyment of his own humour, it is reasonable to suppose that he meant 'a good joke.'

As he mounted his horse at the Hall door, Mr. Roscoe had a few words with him in his self-assumed character of head of the house. The Doctor spoke with much greater plainness to him respecting his patient than he had done to the ladies. 'The case is a very serious one, sir, in my opinion, and not the less that its origin is an affair of the heart.'

So far was the idea from Mr. Roscoe's mind that the two sisters could have been so imprudent as to acquaint the Doctor with family affairs, that he actually imagined him to refer to Grace's having heart disease. 'I have never heard that she was so affected,' he replied.

The observation, though so artless, by no means impressed the Doctor with his simplicity; he only leapt to the right conclusion at once. 'This gentleman,' he said to himself, 'takes it for granted that I have been told nothing, and has no wish to enlighten me.'

Mr. Roscoe instantly perceived his mistake, and began speaking of Grace's change of views with great freedom.

'It is a resolution she has come to from the arguments of her trustee and guardian,' he said; 'none of us have had anything to do with it. Her conclusion, however, is in my opinion a just one; but of course the sentiment remains. Under such circumstances (and since her intention is unalterable), I conclude it would be well, to avoid any risk of excitement, that the late object of her affections should leave the house as soon as possible?'

His tone was as indifferent as he could make it, though the having the Doctor's opinion on such a matter upon his side struck him as of great importance.

'It is impossible for me, Mr. Roscoe,' answered the Doctor gravely, 'to say either "yes" or "no" to that question at pre-

sent. It is only too likely that it may make no difference to the poor girl whether the young man goes or stays; she is on the brink of brain fever. But should she survive it, it would in my opinion be the wiser course to keep Mr. Sinclair—and from what I gather from her sisters I conclude he has no wish to go—within reach. His presence may be of the greatest service; and if the worst comes to the worst, it may be a comfort to her to wish him farewell.'

'With brain fever?' inquired Mr. Roscoe cynically, his disappointment at the other's reply getting the better of his usual self-restraint.

'I am supposing that she comes to herself again,' answered the Doctor harshly, for he too had a temper of his own; 'if not, I presume Miss Tremenhare will not grudge the hospitality she will have thrown away upon him. Good afternoon, sir,' and with a curt nod he put spurs to his cob and rode away.

'An impudent apothecary!' was Mr. Roscoe's comment as he turned to enter the house; but, however he may have despised the man, he felt that a spoke had been put into the wheel of his plans, which, for a time at least, would interfere with its working. Even in his anger, however, he clearly perceived the source of this mischance. 'This all comes of the senseless frankness with which that old busybody's questions have been answered upstairs,' he muttered to himself. 'Agnes I can trust not to lose her head, but Philippa, where sentiment is concerned, is always a fool.' He did not feel any especial resentment towards Walter, as a less practical schemer would have done, but, since it was now probable that the young fellow would stay on, resolved to treat him with civility. And thus it happened that things went on at the Hall with tolerable smoothness, notwithstanding late events. There was a difference of course, however, in the manner of their going. In spite of their dread of the sick room, Agnes and Philippa were a good deal, by turns, in their sister's room, and scarcely ever appeared together in public, even at meals. These were always melancholy affairs; for many days the Angel of Death hovered over the household and laid its finger on every lip. The Doctor, indeed (none of your despairing ones), could at one time only say, 'I do not yet give up all hope.' It may be imagined, therefore, how Walter's spirits sank to zero, and the gloom darkened on Richard Roscoe's brow; they found a melancholy consolation in each other's company, but seldom interchanged a word. Walter

knew that he had Richard's sympathy, but never guessed the sufferings—so blind is love to others as well as to its object—that he endured upon his own account. Agnes was genuinely grieved, and Philippa passionately so; her soul was wrung with remorse as well as pity. Mr. Roscoe alone was resigned to the obstruction that interfered with his plans, and looked confidently to nature to remove it. He had no ill-will to Grace, he confessed to himself, but it would be a great relief to him if she went to heaven. *Dis aliter visum*, or, as he expressed it, 'this business turned out as badly as every other infernal thing that he had put his hand to.' Grace got better; it was not the worst thing that could have happened to him, but it complicated matters that were already in a very serious tangle. The rejoicings of the household jarred upon him in a manner that, looking at himself from the outside as it was his habit to do, almost alarmed him.

Disappointment and delay he had hitherto borne with wonderful equanimity, considering the dangers they brought with them, but he felt that he was now losing his patience and his temper. As there is nothing so successful as success, so he was well aware there is nothing that precipitates calamity like desperation, and yet he was growing desperate. He knew it and fought against it, but, though slowly, despair was gaining the upper hand of him. Perils environed him on every side of which no one knew, or knew all, except himself. As Josh had foreseen, and even taxed him with that folly, Edward Roscoe was a gambler to the core; he could perceive the rashness of it in others, with whom it took other directions, and he had often profited by it. He was not even blind to it in his own case, but his overpowering egotism and confidence in his own sagacity had led him into enormous speculations, which had turned out ill, and involved him in liabilities which he had no means of meeting, except by dribblets and fair words. He was furious, not so much with his ill luck, as with the failure of his own forecasts. He had been taken in by inferior scoundrels. If he had had any, one might almost have said that his self-respect was wounded. What helped to drive him to despair was the atmosphere of hate—his own hate, and of his own making—with which he was surrounded. He had never cared for anyone but himself, but that very solicitude had hitherto prevented him from indulging in animosities which are always disadvantageous; he had had, at the worst, only a cold contempt for those who stood in his way or thwarted his

schemes. But now he began to hate them. Even his brother, though Agnes had never revealed his conduct to her, had become an object of suspicion to him. He resented his familiarity with Walter, and felt that he was not to be depended upon for carrying out his scheme with respect to Grace. If the girl had died this would not have mattered, but she was getting better. If she got well, and was reconciled, in spite of all that had come and gone, with Walter, it would not matter; but he was none the less angry with Richard. He now repented that he had made a confidante of either of the sisters with respect to the document that he had intercepted; women were not fit to be trusted with secrets, though at the time it had seemed to him the safest course to take. It was not likely that they would reveal it, since it would be the destruction of their own expectations. If Grace should ever marry Walter, she should never know but that she did so otherwise than to her own detriment; he would be always Sinclair to her and never Vernon; though Roscoe now wished that he had kept that matter to himself. But he hated Sinclair because there lay in him—though he knew it not and should never know it—the potentiality of seizing the whole Tremenhere estate for himself or his offspring.

Philippa, indeed, Mr. Roscoe could hardly be said to hate; but he was exasperated with her for her weakness about the young people, which had enlisted the Doctor on their side, and also for a certain obstinacy which she still occasionally exhibited in opposing his wishes. The person he hated most of all was the lady whose hospitality he was enjoying, and who had done him a hundred good offices, Agnes Tremenhere. It is said that the very wickedest of us have a tender spot in our hard hearts for those who love us, that even a Sykes has a weakness for his Nancy. But this is not only not the case, but in some instances their very liking for us aggravates our dislike for them. Perhaps if Agnes had always been subservient to him he would have had the same contemptuous tolerance for her as he had for Philippa, but her occasional fits of fondness found no favour with him; while her opposition, which was much more frequent and resolute than that of her sister, now inspired him with a feeling that was little short of fury. Mr. Edward Roscoe felt, in short, that he was becoming dangerous; a thing which would not have troubled him much had he not been aware that such a frame of mind was likely to be hurtful not only to others but to himself.

CHAPTER XLV.

'EDWARD'S QUEEN.'

GRACE TREMENDHERE had survived the crisis of what had been a most dangerous illness, and was on the road to recovery; she had returned to consciousness, but yet could hardly be said to have 'come to herself.' Her condition resembled that of some would-be suicide who, having been rescued from the fate she has sought, says to herself, 'Am I alive, or am I dead?' and then comes suddenly to the sad knowledge that it is the Present—and the Past—that she is confronting, and not the Future.

But the Grace Tremendhere whom we knew she was no longer. Her beautiful hair is shorn, her eyes are caverns, her cheeks are shrunk and pale; but all that is nothing compared with the hopeless void within. The consciousness of the full extent of her misery has come back to her. When she awoke first with a sane mind, it so happened that only the nurse and the Doctor were in the room.

'Is he here still?' she inquired feebly.

'Yes, my dear, he has not gone yet,' said the nurse consolingly. 'Miss Grace is asking for you, sir.'

The Doctor took her place by the bedside. He knew that he was not in the girl's thoughts at all, but that did not wound his *amour propre*. His weather-beaten face was full of the keenest sympathy, yet cheery too; of all his medicines Dr. Gardner was, his patients said, the most wholesome tonic.

'Yes, my dear, he is still here,' he said.

'Then he does not know,' she moaned, and closed her eyes.

The Doctor's position was an embarrassing one. He was not in his patient's confidence, nor, indeed, after that first visit of his, had he been in that of her sisters. Mr. Roscoe was a book clasped and locked to him, or, as he himself expressed it, like a railway company of whose time-table *Bradshaw* scornfully remarks, 'No information.'

With Walter Sinclair, however, the doctor had had some talk, and was thoroughly acquainted with that young gentleman's sentiments, as well as with his views of the situation.

'It doesn't much signify, my dear, what he knows, or what he does not know,' answered the Doctor dryly; 'he cares for nothing except to hear about you. If he has any regard for me, it is as for

one of his old Indian friends, and Mr. Richard's, because I am the "Medicine Man," and in attendance upon you. Every morning it is "How is Grace?" and never "How do *you* do?"

Her eyes were lit up for a moment with an intense delight, which slowly died away as she replied with a sigh:

'I can't see him—I *daren't* see him.'

'Of course not, my dear. The thing is not to be dreamt of at present—or perhaps, as you were about to say, even at all. Still he will remain here till you are well and strong. Now tell me, is there anything you can think of that will give you pleasure?'

'Nothing, *nothing!*' she moaned despairingly.

'A friend of yours has been writing almost every day to me, one who loves you very much in a fatherly sort of way; when you get a little stronger, don't you think you would like to see *him*?'

'Yes. I should like to see Mr. Allerton very much.'

Dr. Gardner nodded, and put no more questions. He was more than satisfied with the state of his patient. He had the reputation of leaving those he attended upon too soon upon the road to recovery, not so much because he shrank from the least imputation of making the most of them as from his horror of humbug; but Grace Tremenhare's case was an exceptional one in his eyes. He knew that he should soon see her convalescent in its ordinary sense, but he wanted to see her cured, which would, he felt, be a very different thing. So interested had he been in the matter that he had taken the unusual step of communicating with Mr. Allerton, by whom his good intentions had been thoroughly appreciated. It is possible for two honest men to understand one another, even upon paper; and it would have amazed the Council of the Law Association to know how many letters—and those long ones—one of its most eminent members had written without charging his correspondent sixpence for them. He had readily promised that in case of Grace's recovery he would come down to Halswater and see her, though he detested the country in winter, and long journeys—unless at so much per foot—at all times.

Grace was not, however, in a condition to bear such an interview, and in the meanwhile Dr. Gardner discouraged the presence of her sisters about his patient as much as possible. He saw that she shrank from them, though he could not guess the cause; which was no slur on his sagacity, for she could

hardly have explained it herself. What troubled her almost as much as her estrangement from her lover was the new and terrible light which Mr. Roscoe had thrown upon her father's character; and though she had accepted it to a certain extent, she was, strangely enough, more apprehensive now than she had been before of hearing anything from their lips to his disadvantage. She need not have been so, for they had both something else to think about much more pressing than their father's memory, but from Mr. Allerton she felt she would get the truth, without the alloy of disappointment or resentment. She had little hope but that Mr. Roscoe's account of the manner in which Walter's father had been tricked and ruined was correct; the more her mind dwelt upon it—and it shared her mind with that other wretchedness which was its consequence—the more she felt that he could not have invented a story so capable of refutation, but still he might have exaggerated it for his own purposes. If it was true, in its disgraceful entirety, would Walter be still staying on under the same roof with her? She was obliged, alas! to answer for him—because she knew he loved her so—that that might be the case. For her sake he would forgive all, perhaps, and be content to wed with shame, for it was with her father's shame that she identified herself; and it rested with her to prevent the sacrifice.

To the mind, not only of the man of the world, but of any person of average common sense who has over-lived those social superstitions, which are to the full as monstrous as our spiritual ones, this sensitiveness of feeling may seem ridiculous. If one has done nothing wrong oneself, how can one be smirched by another's wrong? But even otherwise honest and good men are found to be so cruel and unjust as to think ill of a person because of his illegitimacy, and Grace was no more illogical than they—indeed, had her case been another's she would have taken a just view of it, but to some sensitive and delicate natures injustice loses its wrong when they are themselves its victims.

In those days of growing convalescence there was at least one comfort to Grace, that Mr. Roscoe did not come near her. She dreaded beyond everything to see the man that had destroyed the edifice both of her faith and of her love, and she wondered at her immunity from this infliction. Agnes wondered also; it seemed so strange that Edward, who always did exactly what was right, should not have seized the first opportunity to congratulate

the girl upon her recovery, but she did not make any observation to him on the matter; the relations between them had become strained on account of her refusal to assist him with a loan of larger amount than usual. She was not fond of lending her money even to him, and perhaps she reflected that his finding himself short of it would hasten his movements in the direction which she still wished him to take as much as ever. She was tired of waiting for this laggard lover, and at the same time resented his making use of her property without having established the right to do so. Moreover his application had been couched in much less loving and seductive tones than he had hitherto given himself the trouble to use. He was getting impatient and reckless. Philippa, on the other hand, was not surprised that he was loth to intrude himself upon the presence of one whom his revelations had made so miserable; but that was not in fact the cause of Mr. Roscoe's failure in what Agnes termed 'a natural attention.' His position had become too perilous, his temper was too severely tried, to admit of his conforming even to the most ordinary conventions. If either sister had remonstrated with him for his neglect of their invalid, he would probably have said that he did not care one farthing whether she was dead or alive.

Neither of them did so, though for very different reasons, and what affected Agnes much more than his brutal indifference to Grace was his growing familiarity with Philippa. This had become very marked; for though his behaviour towards her was in no respect more tender than it had been, he was constantly in her company and alone. They walked together in the garden and in particular on the cliff terrace above the lake, at the end of which a tower, or 'Folly,' as it was called by the neighbours, had been erected. It was scarcely used even in warm weather, though it had been designed as a summer-house, and it was strange indeed that it should have attractions for anybody at the present time when the mountains were covered with snow and the waters sealed by frost. No one but a woman who has felt jealousy could understand the rage that filled the heart of Agnes Tremenhare when she first saw her sister and Edward Roscoe leave the garden and climb the steps that led to the cliff terrace together. It was not love that took him there, but only the desire of speaking with his companion—on a very different subject—without fear of interruption; but Agnes thought it was love, or rather the pretence of it, which was almost as bad. And Philippa knew that she thought it, and

was not displeased. She had often made her sister jealous, but never with such apparently good reason, for Edward's caution had hitherto restrained her; but now he did not seem to care for prudence. So Philippa took her revenge in feminine fashion for many a snub and slight she had received at her sister's hands.

One afternoon Agnes was in the sick room paying a more perfunctory visit to 'her dear Grace' even than usual; there was no longer any cause for anxiety on the patient's account, and her thoughts were just now dwelling upon other things—the fact that Roscoe and Philippa were walking together in the garden below for one thing. She was not even talking with Grace, upon whom at the moment the nurse was attending, but idly engaged in turning over the leaves of a school history she had taken down from its shelf. It had been one of Grace's lesson-books, not so long ago, when Philippa had been her governess, and was divided into portions with a note here and there in Philippa's hand. On some occasion when she had taken up that book, it is probable that her mind, like that of Agnes at the present moment, was astray from the subject before her, and had dwelt on other things. One historic passage had the phrase 'Philippa, Edward's queen' in it, and the blue pencil in some wandering moment had underscored the words. The writer had doubtless merely wished to see 'how it looked,' with the intention of rubbing it out again, but she had forgotten to do so, and there it stood, 'Philippa, Edward's queen,' *in italics*. The writing on the wall of Belshazzar's palace could scarcely have filled those who saw it with deeper emotion than that which the sight of that blue line evoked in its reader, but the meaning in her case had nothing of mystery in it; it was its very plainness that drove the colour from her cheek and turned her heart to stone. She wondered that Philippa had dared to indulge in a day-dream such as this, but she tore out the leaf and placed it in her bosom—a proof indeed of the treachery she had long suspected. As she did so, her eyes chanced to glance at the window, and through it perceived her sister and her companion ascending the winding steps that led to the terrace. With a wild cry which startled Grace in her pillowed chair she rushed from the room.

CHAPTER XLVI.

'SHE IS MY WIFE.'

THE shades of early evening were already falling, and the day had been bitterly cold, but Agnes Tremenhare delayed only long enough to throw on her bonnet and shawl before taking her way to the terrace. There was a fire in her blood that prevented her from feeling the fog that was rising from the mere, or the wintry air upon the hill-top. We cannot hold a fire in our hand by thinking of the frosty Caucasus, but passion is stronger than imagination, and can for a time ignore all physical inconveniences; she trembled in every limb, but it was not with cold. As she hurried up the winding steps that led to the cliff-top she had no definite purpose in view, she had not thought of what to say or what to do; a blind instinct of rage and hate impelled her to seek out the treacherous pair, and tax one of them at least with her perfidy. The proof of it, that lay in her bosom and seemed to burn it, was slight indeed; but coming as it did upon the top of a hundred corroborating circumstances, and, above all, at a moment when her jealousy was at its height, it brought conviction with it. Philippa, 'Edward's queen.' She tried to think of the shameless woman only, and not of her companion; she could not bear to picture *him* as yielding to temptation. It was impossible that for all these years he could have paid court to her, given her, tacitly but unmistakably, to understand that his life was bound up in hers, and of late that nothing but mere pecuniary details prevented their becoming one in the eyes of all as they had long been in their inmost hearts, and yet have been deceiving her. These are things common enough with lovers, but of which no woman believes her lover capable. Her rival in his affection is, on the other hand, capable of anything. She will tell Philippa what she thinks of her, and in Edward's presence, so that hereafter he shall have no excuse for being deceived.

Those she is in search of are not on the terrace, but in the 'Folly,' a roomy and solid structure, with a stone chamber below, intended to be used as a kitchen for the accommodation of picnic parties, and above, a well-lighted apartment commanding an extensive view. The windows are of parti-coloured glass, through which the landscape is supposed to be seen under the aspects of the four seasons. Unlike the seasons of the soul, wherein it is more

difficult to recall our hours of adversity when we are happy than to picture our happiness when we are miserable, it is an easier task to portray winter in summer than summer in winter. There is no pane, however brightly hued, that can now bring back the hour 'of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower.' At this time of year, even at noonday, the room with its spare summer furniture looks bare and melancholy, in unison with the fog and frost without. Its tenants, too, are wretched-looking; they are standing by one of the windows, and fix their gaze upon it, not because the wintry scene has any attraction for them, but because each prefers it to looking into the other's face. They have not exactly quarrelled, but they have disagreed, and are very dissatisfied, though not in the same degree, with one another. It is not without difficulty that Roscoe can conceal his exasperation against his companion for her obstinacy in refusing his request for a sum of money which he has told her is necessary for the re-establishment of his fortunes. It is necessary, indeed, for him to obtain it, though not for that purpose; it is wanted to stave off the impending ruin, but that he dares not tell her. He can only use the same arguments he has often used before on less pressing occasions.

'Five thousand pounds is such a monstrous sum,' she pleads. 'To give you money is like pouring water into a sieve. Not that I grudge you, Edward. Hush, what's that?'

The door at the top of the short flight of stairs is open, but they have no fear of interruption, and do not sink their voices as they speak. Mr. Roscoe, indeed, speaks loudly and vehemently, his habits of caution, great and small, having alike disappeared in these later days. He pays no attention to his companion's interpolated inquiry, but answers scornfully:

'Grudge me? I hope not indeed. I think I have some claim upon you, Philippa.'

'You have indeed, dear Edward, every claim, but——'

'What claim?' cries a terrible voice, at which Philippa shrieks aloud, and even Roscoe for a moment trembles.

Agnes is standing in the doorway, her flaming eyes fixed upon her sister, her hand pointing to her companion. 'What claim can you have on Edward Roscoe? Your treacherous and lying tongue is silent. Edward, I appeal to *you*.'

There was a moment of painful and embarrassed silence, and then the man doggedly replied: 'She is my wife.'

'Your wife! Philippa your wife? Then if you are not a liar you are a thief. You have been drawing her money—*my* money—under false pretences. Five thousand pounds! why that is half her fortune! Mr. Allerton shall know of this. So you are a rogue and a fool in one.'

'He is neither the one nor the other,' exclaimed Philippa. 'You would never had called him so had he married you instead of me.'

'You viper!'

'You offcast!'

'Hush, hush!' interrupted Roscoe imperiously. 'Go home, Philippa, and leave me to deal with her.'

'Home! She will have no home after to-morrow,' cried Agnes furiously. 'You have wasted her miserable fortune for her before you began to steal what is mine by rights. And as for you who have beggared her, you will go to gaol.'

Her injurious words, spoken too in another's presence, would at any time have chafed Edward Roscoe's spirit beyond endurance, but now, in that moment of despair, with the consciousness that his long-cherished plans were futile and their object known, his face was like that of a baffled tiger.

'Go home, Philippa,' he repeated, with angry vehemence.

'One would think you were speaking to a dog,' said Agnes, with a grating laugh; 'and like a dog she sneaks away. I am glad to see it.'

Philippa's exit, indeed, was far from dignified. Notwithstanding her last brave words she was frightened at her sister, and reassured only by the knowledge that she had her husband to back her. Now that he had ordered her away, her turkey-like exhibition of wrath was over; she felt like a boned turkey. She tottered downstairs, and hurried along the bleak terrace, where the evening fog was thickening, towards the house. Its lights were already lit, and offered for the present at least a welcome. Was it really true, as Agnes had told her, that she had no longer a right to share its shelter? It was quite true that she had already given to Edward the whole sum, and more, that she had inherited under her father's will, in case she should marry in defiance of its restrictions. Had he indeed brought himself within the grasp of the law? That Agnes would show them no mercy she was well convinced. And did she deserve mercy? Had she not by her own misconduct hurried her father, though undesignedly,

to his death? The thought had often occurred to her, and always with a remorseful shock, but never with greater force than now. When she reached the house, fortunately unseen by anyone, and locked the door of her own room behind her, that did not shut out this reflection. She threw herself into a chair, and covered her eyes with her hands, but the awful scene presented itself to her with greater distinctness than ever. It was the night of the conflagration at the theatre. Grace had come home in safety, and her father had not been aroused. The least shock, the doctor had said, might prove fatal, but the news of her peril had been spared to him, and she rejoiced at it, though she was well aware that her husband was calculating on the old man's death. Edward and she had been married many months, and were only waiting for it to announce the fact. The terms of his will were unknown to them.

It was very late, and Edward was bidding her good night in the corridor. She had been dreadfully upset by the events of the evening, and his manner was unusually tender and comforting; he had his arm round her waist, and was giving her a farewell kiss, when a door was suddenly opened, and her father stood before them in his dressing-gown.

'What is this?' he cried, addressing his confidential assistant. 'How dare you? And you, you shameless slut?'

'Father dear, he is my husband,' pleaded Philippa.

Those were the last words that passed between them. Poor 'Josh' fell forward on his face and never spoke again. They carried him back into his room, but even if they had dared to send for help it would have availed him nothing. In a few minutes he was a dead man. It was no wonder that Mr. Allerton had found Philippa the next day agitated by such unexpected emotion. Though she had got over the dreadful experience in time, and, as we have seen, could even join with Agnes in her denunciations of her father's memory, she never forgot that it was her own conduct which had cut short his life. It was a string that Mr. Roscoe had often played upon, and it had always vibrated to his touch. Sometimes she even said to herself, 'I am a murderess.' At others, when it was her husband's rôle to make light of her part in the matter, she took it less to heart; but just now remorse was gripping her. Oh! why did Edward not come? Why did he leave her alone with these awful thoughts? What could he have to say to Agnes that had so long delayed him? At last there was

a knock at the door she knew, for they had many such secret signs, these two; and Edward stood before her, pale, wild-looking, and breathless.

'What did Agnes say? What do you think she will do?' she inquired anxiously. 'Have you made it up in any way?'

'Yes,' he answered in a hollow voice. 'I think she is somewhat pacified.' He sank into a chair, and wiped his forehead with his handkerchief. 'Have you any brandy? No, don't go down for it,' he put in sharply, for she was moving quickly towards the door. She pitied his condition, which, indeed, was easily to be accounted for. What an interview must he have had, poor fellow, and all through his own boldness in confessing that he was married to her! Notwithstanding its probable consequences she admired him for that. It was a declaration which she had long desired to make herself, at all hazards.

'Agnes keeps a little brandy in her room, but perhaps she came home with you, and I dare not meet her.'

'She did not come back,' he answered, 'but the brandy is no matter. Stay where you are. Let us be together,' and he looked round him apprehensively.

'Dear Edward, that is what we shall now always be,' she replied caressingly. 'Out of this seeming harm, as you have often told me, good may, perhaps will, come to us. For my part I am sick of our long career of secrecy and deception. Money is not everything after all.'

She rather expected an outburst from him against her 'sentimental folly,' but there was none. His face showed no trace of anger, but wore a listening air, as though he was willing to hear her speak on. He even suffered her to take his hand and fondle it.

'There may be trouble before us, Edward, but it cannot be so hard to bear, so far as I am concerned, as what I have suffered of late. To live under the same roof with Agnes was getting insupportable; and, even if you had not spoken out as you did just now, it could not have lasted much longer. However she may behave to us, dear Grace will, I know, be our friend, though I fear we have not deserved it. Is it not possible, now that things have happened as they have done, that we may do her a good turn?'

What she felt, but did not say, was, 'Now that your own plan has miscarried, there can be no reason for making her unhappy,

and I think you could make matters straight between her and Walter if you chose.' She had still great faith in his cleverness, though, alas, but little in his sense of right.

He nodded, as she hoped in approval, and she went on with rising spirits:

'Mr. Allerton, though he is no friend of yours, is devoted to Grace, and has some influence even with Agnes; I am sure that he will effect some kind of settlement. It would be quite contrary to his wish that there should be any public disruption of the family. We must leave Halswater, of course, but it need not be under a cloud.'

'Yes, Allerton is the man,' he murmured, with a sigh of relief; 'he will patch things up for Grace's sake. What's that?' he cried, suddenly springing to his feet. 'Why are they tolling the church bell?'

'My dear Edward, what is the matter with you?' she exclaimed apprehensively. 'That is not the church bell; it is the gong for afternoon tea.'

'To be sure, I had forgotten,' he answered moodily, and sat down again.

'But what am I to do, Edward? I daren't go down alone to meet her. You *must* come down with me. Do you think it possible that she will break out again before Walter and your brother?'

'No.'

'Then I will go down and pour out the tea as usual. It will be best to treat her, for the present, even if we go to-morrow, as if nothing had happened.'

He did not answer her, though he still wore that listening look. The beating of the gong had ceased, but the wind was rising, and howled without like some unhappy disembodied spirit.

'Did anyone see you return to the house, Philippa?' he suddenly inquired with great earnestness.

'No one.'

'Nor me. That is so far fortunate. Now listen; we two came in together, leaving Agnes on the terrace.'

'But we didn't, Edward.'

'Hush, you fool! I say we *did*. She said she wanted a bracing walk, and we left her there, pacing up and down. There was no quarrel between us of any kind. Do you understand?'

She did not understand, but she began to suspect. She stared

at him with horrified eyes; her tongue clave to the roof of her mouth.

'You can keep a secret, I know,' he went on in a menacing tone. 'You have kept more than one of your own. Keep mine.'

'Great heaven, what have you done?' she cried.

'Nothing. I left her there—we left her there; there is no parapet—she may have fallen over into the lake for all I know. Come down to tea. There is no fear of meeting Agnes. Come.' He offered his hand, but she drew back, and kept him at arm's length. Her face expressed horror and disgust, nay, even hate.

'You don't feel well enough—a severe headache? Very well, I'll say so. Do as you please. Only remember we two came in together.' He was gone.

CHAPTER XLVII.

ON THE SPOT.

WHEN Mr. Roscoe went downstairs he found both his brother and Walter Sinclair in the drawing-room. They were neither of them much devoted to the institution of five o'clock tea, but they were generally present at it, because from one or other of the two sisters they learnt news from the sick room. The absence of both Agnes and Philippa on the present occasion made them not a little anxious.

'Have you any news?' inquired Walter of Mr. Roscoe.

'No,' he answered; 'she has not come in yet.' The instant the words had passed his lips he owned his folly. Was he becoming an idiot because of what had happened, that he could not get it out of his thoughts for an instant, and must imagine that everybody else was equally occupied with the subject? 'I thought you were referring to the absence of Miss Agnes,' he continued carelessly, in reply to the others' look of amazement. 'She is still out of doors; and unfortunately Miss Philippa, I am informed, has one of her bad headaches, and will not be here to do the honours of the tea-table, so we must help ourselves.'

As they did not seem inclined to do this, Mr. Roscoe poured out the tea for them, and not with his usual neatness of hand; he was thinking of something else—listening again—and spilt it.

Walter noticed his preoccupation, and guessed its cause—or a part of it.

‘Miss Agnes cannot surely be out of doors in this weather; it is snowing.’

‘Thank heaven!’ exclaimed Mr. Roscoe mechanically.

We often do thank heaven for strange things, even for things that would appear to have their origin in quite another place; just as we often, alas! pray to heaven for gifts that are far from celestial in their nature, and which can only be secured at the expense of our fellow-creatures. Still the strangeness of Mr. Roscoe’s exclamation attracted the attention of both his hearers.

‘What on earth should you want snow for?’ inquired his brother.

Richard’s manner, like his own, had undergone some change of late. He had never been so subservient to Edward as it was his obvious duty (or at all events his interest) to be; but he had now become irritable and antagonistic. He took little pains to conceal the opinion he entertained of his nature and projects. Edward had come to the conclusion that it would be necessary to get rid of this relative, who had the insolence to ban what he had been sent for to bless, and so far from being a helpmate was a hinder-mate; only just now much more serious matters than his dismissal were on his mind.

‘Well, you don’t understand agricultural matters in England, my good fellow,’ he answered, ‘but the country wants snow. When that has fallen the frosts will probably break up.’

‘At present, though the snow *is* falling,’ replied Richard curtly, ‘it is colder than ever.’

‘It is strange indeed that in such inclement weather Miss Agnes should still be out of doors,’ observed Walter, going to the window and throwing back its gilded shutter. ‘The lights in the garden are lit, so that she must know it’s late; where has she gone?’

‘Miss Philippa and I left her walking on the terrace,’ said Mr. Roscoe, speaking with great distinctness. ‘I told her it was near tea-time, but she said she felt in need of exercise, having been in attendance on her sister this afternoon, and would take a turn or two more.’

‘The steps are very slippery this weather,’ observed Walter; ‘I think some one should go and look after her.’

There was no reply to this remark, so Walter left the room,

put on his great coat, and went out. It was already dark, and the snow was falling heavily, so that it was not easy, even by help of the garden lamps, to find one's way to the winding steps that led to the terrace, though Walter had keen eyes, which had been used to heavier snows than ever fall in Westmoreland. It was certainly no evening for a delicate woman to be abroad in. He thought it possible that Miss Agnes might be snow-bound or fog-bound in the summer-house, and afraid to venture back along the unprotected walk, with its cliff descending down into the lake, so for the summer-house he made. Its door was standing open, which corroborated his view of the matter, and he went upstairs crying 'Miss Agnes, Miss Agnes!' in order not to alarm her by his sudden entrance. It was an unnecessary precaution. The room which had of late been the scene of such a stormy interview was empty, and in place of those voices of passion there was only the shrill cry of the wind, and the soft crush of the snow as it huddled against the window-pane. 'Miss Agnes, Miss Agnes!' Heaven only knows whether she heard him, but there was no response. Walter was now seriously alarmed. It was next to impossible that she could have wandered off the terrace on the landward side, because she would have had the lights from the Hall to guide her, but it *was* possible that in keeping too near them she had fallen over the cliff. On his way back he met both the Roscoes with servants and lanterns, and they made what search they could, but the whirling snow hid everything. Before that began to fall the marks of the passage of any heavy body down the friable steep would have been discernible, but it was now hopeless to detect them. The lake beneath had become unapproachable, for while no boat could be put on it on account of its icy covering, the ice was not thick enough—it seldom was in 'fathomless Halswater'—to bear the weight of a human being. There was nothing for it but to wait for the morning, and in the meantime to hope. It was just possible that even now Agnes had reached home by some other route.

It was a terrible night for the whole household—sickening to those who suffered from suspense, and far worse to those who knew. Agnes was not popular, but as they thought of her, lost in the whirling snow or drowned in the frozen lake, it was not her defects that were dwelt upon. She had been a hard woman, but not an unjust one; prudent, but not close-fisted; a good but

not over-exacting housekeeper. If this is not much to say in her favour, and yet all hearts (save one) bled for her for pity's sake, think what suspense must mean to households (there are thousands of them) whose breadwinner is at sea, 'given up' at Lloyd's, but not at home, or whose darling is reported 'missing' in the wars! Heaven shield us, reader, from such miseries! A score of times the doors were opened to the night, and anxious faces peered into the white gloom; a score of times there was heard, or seemed to be heard, a knocking, a tap, a voice, and they said 'Hush!' or 'That is she!' But she came not. Grace, of course, knew nothing of her absence; she had sorrows of her own enough, and was spared that awful watch. But Philippa—Philippa was more to be pitied than even Agnes. She knew, though she tried to persuade herself that she knew not; or at all events she knew that her husband knew. With that knowledge all love for him—the last relics of it—had fled from her bosom; nay, the very fact that it had ever filled it increased her loathing for the man. The recollection even of her own antagonism to Agnes increased it. In cutting short her sister's life he had deprived herself (oh cruel and remorseless wretch!) of the hope of reconciliation.

'I did not kill her,' Roscoe said to his wife that night, 'so help me heaven! It was her own fault. As we were walking home together she stepped backward and fell over the cliff.'

Philippa answered nothing, but her face said, 'You lie.'

He felt that all was over between them as regarded affection—as, indeed, it had long been on his side; one foe the more, one would have thought, could not have made much difference. He was now an outcast from his kind, without one single tie to them save that of self-interest. We know what comes of the 'solitary system' in gaol, *at first*—how the heart of the prisoner is filled with hatred and malice against the whole world, which he accuses of having devised, or permitted, his punishment. Something of this feeling took possession of Edward Roscoe. He would revenge himself on humanity—or at all events on all those to whom he owed a grudge, or who were obnoxious to him—on the first opportunity; but in the meantime there was a more pressing matter to be attended to, his own personal safety. Though Philippa was not to be trusted, in any gracious sense of the word, he felt he could rely on her, whatever might be her suspicions, not to denounce him. If she had resolved not to assist him with that statement of their having come home

together from the terrace, she would have said so. He saw that she was no longer afraid of him, that hate had cast out fear, but her silence in this connection meant consent. Even if she did witness against him, her evidence would be valueless in law, for was she not his wife? But that was a revelation, unless pushed to it very hard, he would certainly not make at such a juncture.

Throughout that night to no inmate of the Hall, save the invalid girl, came balmy sleep. Anxiety for Agnes, or at least a wild excitement, agitated every bosom. At last on the blank scene rose the blank day; the snow shroud was over all things, and the snow still falling with silent persistence. There was no trace of the lost woman to be seen anywhere, but all the probabilities pointed to one direction. The narrow dangerous footway that could just be followed in summer, on the margin of the steep side of Halswater, was of course invisible, and the only means of approach to the lake was by letting down men by ropes from the terrace, who at great risk of immersion swept the snow away from its ice-bound surface.

At last was found, not indeed what they sought, for that was impossible, but a spot where the ice was very thin, and round it signs of fracture. Some heavy body had evidently fallen through with great force on the previous evening, and though the night's frost had sealed up the hole, and the snow in its turn had covered it, the fate that had befallen Agnes Tremenhare was sufficiently revealed. Any attempt to rescue the body was for the present useless; there it lay 'full fathom five,' and deeper yet, and must needs lie until the ice melted and the water could be dragged. It was no wonder that Edward Roscoe had said 'Thank heaven!' when he had heard that the snow was falling, for it concealed all evidence, if evidence there was, of what had happened on land, while the lake could be trusted to keep its own secret. There could be no inquest, so he had nothing to fear from Philippa's weakness; he told his own story, and, as he had calculated, she did not gainsay it.

They had left her sister walking by herself upon the terrace, in her usual health and spirits, and there was no reason for doubt how, in that dangerous spot, she had come by her end.

To everyone else, however, these circumstances greatly added to the horror of the catastrophe. It is no matter to ourselves, when our spirit has fled, what becomes of its poor human tenement, but to

those belonging to us it makes a difference. It is far worse to us, 'the fools of habit,' as the poet tells us, that 'hands so often clasped in ours should toss with tangle and shell'—and that 'the vast and wandering grave' of ocean should environ one familiar to us—than that he should lie 'neath the churchyard sod. In Agnes's case, so near her home and yet so far from it, the circumstances were even more painful, yet not even Philippa thought of leaving the Hall; it seemed to be an act of desertion towards one whom she had already wronged enough. She would wait there until the last rites could be paid to her sister.

Nor did Edward attempt to dissuade her. One would have thought he would have been eager to leave a scene which, whatever part he had played in it, must have been at least an awful one to look back upon. On the contrary, he often sought the terrace alone, though never after nightfall. It is possible that with some return of his old caution he did so to make assurance sure that there was nothing left there of a compromising character, or perhaps there was some morbid attraction for him in the place such as is said to coerce those who have the guilt of blood upon their souls to revisit the scene of their crime. But in my opinion it was the former reason. Just as a good man will entertain no scruple about having killed some cruel wretch in the act of attempting the murder of some innocent girl, so it is probable Edward Roscoe experienced no remorse in the contemplation of the fate of one who had always been as a millstone about his neck, and whose last act had been to denounce and threaten him with punishment. My belief is that after the first few hours of terror and excitement, when he was certainly far from being himself, he thought of it no more (except for its possible consequences) than a chess-player who sweeps a piece from his adversary's board. What had happened, though there was doubtless danger in it, was so far of great advantage to him. To a certain extent it even strengthened his hands, not only by its leaving fewer adversaries to deal with, but by increasing that courage of despair which he had of late experienced. He felt that his masterful nature would now stick at nothing, and drew from it the conclusion that nothing—in the way of defeat—could stop him. Indeed, he had already reaped some material benefit. Though his wife showed the utmost loathing for him when they chanced to be alone together, and would even remain stubbornly silent when he addressed her upon any subject in

connection with her lost sister, he found her unexpectedly subservient in pecuniary matters. She signed certain documents—the very ones she had hitherto refused to sign—which enabled him to tide over his more pressing difficulties. ‘What is money to me *now*?’ she said in despairing tones. ‘Take what you will of it, since you have taken all besides’—a state of mind which, in a wife with a large banking account of her own, seemed to him laudable and meritorious in the highest degree.

Mr. Allerton, however, whose visit to Halswater this catastrophe to its mistress had naturally precipitated, was coming to the Hall at once, a circumstance that was by no means so welcome. There was nothing, he knew, to discover, but there were persons under that roof, Mr. Roscoe was aware, who regarded him with unfavourable eyes, and he did not wish their wits to be sharpened by contact with those of the family lawyer.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

A COMFORTER.

WHEN Mr. Allerton arrived at Halswater he was pleurably disappointed, as our English ‘bull’ runs, in not being made welcome, as usual, by the *de facto* master of the house. It had hitherto been Mr. Edward Roscoe’s custom to receive all guests that visited the Tremenhare ladies as if they had been his own, but on the present occasion he did not even give himself the trouble to depute that office. So it strangely enough happened that Mr. Allerton was received by Walter Sinclair—a person who, so far from having any authority to welcome him to the Hall, had himself, as we know, but a precarious footing there. Moreover the last letter in which the lawyer had mentioned his name had been by no means a letter of recommendation; it had been that which he had written to Grace, remonstrating with her on the encouragement she had given to the young man, and pointing out how very undesirable from a practical point of view he would be as a husband, and Walter knew that he had written it. So fair and honest was the young man’s character, however, that he felt no spark of resentment against the lawyer on that account—he was Grace’s guardian, he reflected, and simply doing his duty—but only remembered the kindnesses he had personally received at the other’s hands.

'I am so glad you are come, Mr. Allerton,' he exclaimed as they shook hands warmly; 'things are all going on here as in a ship without a rudder.'

He took him to his room, which was in 'the Cottage,' next his own, and the two had a long talk together, but without touching on the subject which had placed them in antagonism to one another.

'First, about poor Miss Agnes?' said the lawyer. 'Tell me frankly, what is your view?'

Walter raised his eyes in some astonishment.

'There is nothing to tell but what has been told you. Mr. Roscoe and Miss Philippa left her on the terrace. It is a dangerous spot except in the daytime for anybody, as you will see for yourself. It was evening, and snowing heavily; there is not a doubt that the poor lady fell into the lake.'

'A ghastly catastrophe, indeed,' observed the other gravely. 'And of course Miss Grace knows nothing about it?'

'Nothing. It would be madness to tell her. Dr. Gardner will give you an account of her condition; he comes here this afternoon instead of the morning on purpose to do so. We have every confidence in him.'

'Whom do you mean by "we"?'

Walter flushed up to his eyes. 'It was an expression I own I had no right to use,' he said apologetically. 'I am quite aware that I have no recognised position here, but everything, as I have hinted, is topsyturvy.'

'It was always that,' observed the lawyer dryly; 'or at least the person who had the least right to be there was at the head of affairs. He is so still, I suppose, and more than ever.'

'In a sort of way, yes; but, on the other hand, he does not take so much upon himself; he seems to care little how things go.'

'What has happened—as indeed it well may do—monopolises his thoughts, I conclude?'

The lawyer's words were indifferent, but not his tone. He seemed to be awaiting some reply from his companion and with anxiety, though there hardly seemed occasion for a reply.

'No doubt; this terrible event has unhinged us all, and brought us into new relations. That is why I used the word "we" just now, for Miss Philippa takes me a good deal into her confidence.'

'And not Mr. Roscoe?' inquired the lawyer sharply.

'I can't say about that, but she certainly seems to avoid his

society, which, as you know, she did not use to do. There are many changes here,' replied the young fellow.

'I suppose so; that was to be expected. There is one change for the better, however, I am glad to find from Dr. Gardner's letters. Have you seen her?'

'I? Certainly not, sir. She has forbidden me—that is, before she was taken ill, and as I was given to understand in consequence of some communication from yourself, she forbade me to see her.'

'Indeed. Who told you that?'

'She told me herself—that is, in her own handwriting.'

'Let me see it.'

Walter went into his own room and produced the slip of paper she had written to him: 'Seek,' &c.

The lawyer examined the manuscript very carefully.

'Mr. Roscoe brought you that communication?' he remarked.

'Yes. But it is Grace's handwriting,' replied Walter in response to an expression on the other's face. 'Miss Philippa corroborates the fact—so far. Still the affair is unintelligible to me, in some respects—though perhaps not to you?' he added with a touch of bitterness.

To this question the lawyer made no rejoinder; he shifted his chair and gazed absently before him, evidently in deep thought.

'What sort of a person is this Mr. Richard Roscoe?' he inquired presently.

'A very honest fellow, but eccentric. He has had troubles—perhaps has them now—which I sometimes fear has affected his mind.'

'Is he on good terms with his brother?'

'There is no open quarrel between them, but there is certainly no love lost. He mistrusts Mr. Edward very much, I think.'

'He must be mad indeed if he didn't,' was Mr. Allerton's cynical reply. 'If that man was an American, he would be called "the Champion Scoundrel." Does he see much of Grace?'

'He has never seen her, I understand, since the interview in which she gave him that writing. So at least Miss Philippa tells me.'

'Who does see her?'

'Only Miss Philippa, the Doctor, and the nurse—Here is the Doctor.'

Dr. Gardner in his high boots and with his riding-whip in

hand was at 'the Cottage' door. Walter introduced the two men to one another, and left them together. When they came out after a protracted talk, they had both very serious faces.

'I will just look to my patient, Mr. Allerton, and if she is well enough she shall then see *you*.'

The lawyer nodded: a complete understanding seemed to have been arrived at by these two men.

In due course Mr. Allerton was summoned to the sick room. Grace was sitting up in her chair, but still too weak to rise to welcome him. It was a sad meeting, and at first, to his great distress, she gave way to tears.

'That won't hurt her,' said the old Doctor with a wise brutality. 'She would have been better by now had there been more tears.' He left the room, taking the nurse with him.

'I have been wanting to see you, dear Mr. Allerton, these many weeks,' said Grace, placing her thin hand on his. 'You are the only person in whom I have any trust.'

'I am sorry to hear you say that, my dear.'

'Yes; you are the only person I now see (except, indeed, the good Doctor, who cannot help me) in whom I have any confidence. Agnes never comes near me; Philippa is kind, but strangely altered in other respects. They are the only two persons who can answer the question I have to put to you, and I would not apply to them in any case. Mr. Allerton, tell me truly, what was dear papa?'

The lawyer had come down to Halswater prepared to hear strange things, and with stranger things in his own mind than he was likely to hear, but this inquiry was wholly unlooked for, and his face showed it. For the moment he was silent.

'Do not deceive me,' she said plaintively; 'let me know the whole truth.'

'Your father, my dear girl, as everybody knew except yourself, was a money-lender. It is not a calling that is thought highly of, but he was at the head of it; moreover, it does not follow that a money-lender——'

'Was he an honest man?' she interrupted vehemently.

'Yes. For a money-lender, as I have always said, exceptionally honest.'

'Money is the root of all evil,' observed Grace with a sigh and a shudder.

'It is so stated in the copybooks, my dear, and no doubt

there is truth in it. It is bad to beg and bad to borrow, and the trade of lending it is not what one calls a liberal education; still there are money-lenders and money-lenders, and your father was the best specimen of his trade I have ever known.'

'Why did he hide it from me? Why did everybody hide it from me?' she murmured reproachfully.

'Well, for the very reasons I have mentioned. Your father was so passionately fond of you——'

'His little Fairy,' she interrupted, in a trembling voice. 'Heaven knows how I loved him!'

'And also how he loved you, my dear. He always wished you to think the best of him, as we all do. I never should have told you I was a lawyer if I could have helped it. It was weakness in him to conceal the fact, but it was love that made him weak. The same sentiment in a less degree actuated your sisters; they had a grudge against your father, and did not spare his memory so far as they were themselves concerned, but they never strove to disturb your faith in him, and that is to their credit. For my part, I cannot imagine how you could have been ignorant of his profession.'

'I knew he lent his friends money, of course, and not for nothing. But I thought he did them good, and not harm. I did not know that he was'—she sank her voice to a whisper—'a usurer.'

'Who told you he was a usurer? But I need not ask. There is only one man in the world who could have done it.'

'But was it *true*?'

Her pleading eyes looked straight into the lawyer's face. His heart melted within him, but his composure remained outwardly firm.

'You need not answer,' she said despairingly. 'I see it was so; now tell me this. Did gold so weigh with him that kith and kin, justice and compassion were nothing compared with it? Was he such a slave to greed that he could cheat one of his own blood of all he had, and thrive upon his ruin?'

'No! A thousand times, no!' replied the lawyer confidently; 'it is a lie, whoever told you so. In the first place he had no kith or kin except yourselves; in the second, in my judgment he was incapable of such conduct.'

'Are you sure of this?'

Even while she spoke he remembered that her father had

mentioned to him when making his will that he had some far-away cousin ; but the matter seemed to have no reference to the subject on hand, and he yearned to put that torn and tender heart at rest. 'I am quite sure,' he answered.

'In my father's papers, in which you told me every business transaction of his was noted down, was there any word of one with my—with Walter Sinclair's father? It was in connection with some mine in Cornwall.'

'Certainly not. The name would certainly have struck me had it been otherwise. You may set your mind quite at ease, my dear, upon that point.'

'Thank heaven!' she murmured fervently ; 'you have brought me from death to life, dear Mr. Allerton ;' and rising feebly from her chair she kissed him.

(To be continued.)

DINNER-TABLES.

Is the diner-out of to-day better or worse treated, as regards the quality and quantity of his fare, than his predecessor of twenty, thirty, or forty years ago? It is an interesting question, but one to which, unfortunately, the answer is not readily forthcoming; for our few surviving gourmets of a past generation are, by reason of advanced years, impaired digestions, and the unconquerable habit of referring regretfully to the days when Plancus was consul, scarcely to be depended upon for a fair estimate of the relative merits of the earlier and later Victorian *cuisine*.

One thing is certain—that whether we get more or less, or better or worse, to eat than formerly, we certainly have a great deal more to look at. The hospitable board that once, in the language of the reporter of olden days, ‘groaned’ under the weight of saddles and sirloins, barons and chins, now simpers under the imposition of satin and plush, gilt cupids and butterfly nets, French toys and American favours, orchids of price and common field-flowers, combined with enough greenery to furnish forth the material for a respectable May-day festival.

The desire to gratify two senses at one and the same time probably first inspired men to eat their dinners at a flower-decked table, as it has led others mistakenly to spoil their feasts with music, or their music with feasting, whichever way one likes to put it. The floral dinner is, however, a graceful and pleasant fancy, a survival from the Golden Age, a reminiscence of the perpetual picnic of Eden itself. It is hallowed by the associations of a respectable antiquity. Horace, who affected a simplicity he did not always practise, objected to ‘Persian fripperies,’ and, unlike the modern hostess, having no desire for ‘various garlands,’ was indifferent to securing ‘the latest blooming rose’ to deck his banquets; yet even he affected ‘the fragrant myrtle bough,’ the decorative effect of which is, after all, not easily to be beaten, even when arranged on the table-cloth instead of being twined around the classic brow. Heliogabalus, a gourmet of the first water, if we may trust Mr. Alma Tadema, carried his taste in floral table-decoration to a degree of exaggeration which it has been left to the hostesses of to-day only to rival.

What appears most striking in the decorative methods now in vogue is a certain failure in the sense of proportion, which is becoming more pronounced each season, and is hurrying people into extravagances that are bound sooner or later to bring about a reaction in favour of simplicity. It was one thing to adorn a dinner-table artistically with flowers and fruit—although fruit on the table is hardly now permissible—but it is another thing altogether to build up with infinite pains and expense a colossal decorative trophy, with birds and butterflies, squirrels aloft and rabbits below, burrowing under flower-covered faggots, around which space is barely left here and there for the plate of an unfortunate diner, who struggles with trails of ivy dabbling in his soup, and sprays of maidenhair and mimosa bending into his wine-glass, like weeping-willows round a duck-pond, while he gets through his dinner with as uncomfortable a premonition of earwigs and creeping things as if he were assisting at that most decomposing of social entertainments, a genuine picnic.

The evil does not seem likely to end here, however. We are warned of further developments in the immediate future. The scheme of decoration is to undergo expansion, and to rise above the table and to take in its surroundings. The covering ceilings with blooms fixed in wooden frames was practised with considerable effect at some entertainments last season. Recently a young lady arranged a dinner-table above which, as part of the decoration, floated gauze clouds within whose folds birds and butterflies were imprisoned.

If this fancy endure until next summer, we may expect many strange metamorphoses to take effect in London dining-rooms, and the liberty of the subject is likely to be interfered with by arbitrary restrictions being imposed upon the colour and fashion of the ladies' dresses. Not long ago the introduction of a new form of menu card, in the shape of a ship in full sail, inspired a dinner-giver to carry out the idea in its integrity, by making the centre ornament of her table a blue satin ship with the rigging outlined with button-roses, the lady-guests being requested to attire themselves in blue satin dresses, made in nautical fashion, with wreaths of roses perched on one side of the head. In this case only the daughters of the house, whose style the costume probably suited, were sufficiently impressed with the solemnity of the farce to think it necessary to dress up to the menu card.

This sounds like an American story, but it is not. Many of our most admired eccentricities, however, are imported from 'the

other side.' The abominable fashion of discarding the white tablecloth altogether in favour of red or other coloured silk is distinctly Yankee. In New York, coloured entertainments—'pink teas,' 'blue luncheons,' &c.—are very much in fashion. Not only the service and the decorations, but the dresses of the guests are supposed to reproduce the dominant note of colour decided upon by the hostess, who is doubtless influenced in her choice more by the consideration of what suits her complexion than by that of what will be becoming to her visitors.

An English lady, a victim to this queer mania, gave 'a red luncheon' some months ago, the foundation of which was the bare mahogany table, upon which the meal was served without a cloth—in truth, a chilly and comfortless innovation.

The average American, although a colossal eater, does not at present know how to dine. This is a home truth which he resents extremely, and contradicts with vigour; indeed he is apt to introduce comparisons between the restaurants of his own and other lands which invariably leave a large balance in favour of Delmonicos. Still, spite of an occasional exception, the American-born gastronome is as rare a bird as the American-born chef of any serious pretensions.

This is not the biassed opinion of the envious Britisher. What says the native bard?

I've dined with painted savages in regions most remote;
I've seen—and heard—the boarders eat at a German *table d'hôte*;
I've leaped from off of flying trains, and seized, when 'on the run,'
The *lignum-vitæ* sandwich and the patent-leather bun.
I've fondled, when by impecuniosity accursed,
On corners in the dead of night, the fragrant 'Wiener Wurst.'
The gastronomic gamut I have run 'mid varied scenes—
From Pommery to lager beer, from terrapin to beans.

In fair New England have I dwelt, to quite dyspeptic feel,
Because the doughnut and the pie usurped the morning meal.
In sylvan Philadelphia, too, where, at the break of day,
The scrapple and the pepper-box hold undisputed sway.
Oh, retrospective vision of various *cuisines*!
The demon of dyspepsia reigns o'er thy shadowy scenes;
But they can all be laughed to scorn, in Gotham's cosiest nooks,
Where his satanic majesty sends neither food nor cooks!

It is probably the inability to appreciate the real subtleties of the art of dining that hurries the American, eager for distinction, into curious and often puerile experiments in cookery, service, and decoration.

An eccentric and wealthy New-Yorker attempted, a few years ago, to realise a feast after the manner of the ancients—a more palatable one, it is to be hoped, than the one immortalised by Smollet. The guests, attired in chitons and other classic garments, reclined on ivory couches and crowned themselves with rose-garlands, the while they laid foundation for much future discomfort by imbibing wines prepared after the formula of the Roman butler, and wearied their brains in the vain endeavour ‘to give a name’ to the articles in the menu, which, whether written in Attic Greek or Augustan Latin, were certainly Greek to them.

This effort to introduce variety into the national cuisine was hardly successful, although the feast was probably not more provocative of dyspepsia than the average American breakfast, with its concomitants of hot bread and tea, baked pork and beans, pickles and iced water, with other unconsidered trifles.

But this is taking us far from the English dinner-table. It is an American lady, domiciled in London and moving in its ‘hupper suckles,’ to whom, I believe, we are indebted for the introduction of dolls into the decoration of the dinner-table—quaint automatic figures, artistically dressed in silks and satins, propelling wheelbarrows full of flowers or jumping through hoops of roses. A brilliant conception was to represent a flower-market on the table, each stall being filled with a different flower, and presided over by muslin-capped and aproned dolls with Pompadour skirts looped up over pink satin.

This is terribly childish, but Paris has originated follies as puerile, the novelty of the season which has just been imported thence being artfully contrived cardboard imitations of antique armour, helmets, and gauntlets, handcuffs, caskets, swords, and spears. These are made to open to hold sweets or flowers, and, being disposed about the table, interspersed with holly and mistletoe, produce, it is said, an effect never seen before, which, whether it be graceful or not, appears to be the object most held in view by hostesses.

Thus do Wardour Street and the Lowther Arcade enter into competition with Covent Garden in the adornment of the festive board.

Very little indication of the extreme length to which the decoration of the most fashionable tables is carried is afforded by the competitions that still take place at the principal flower-shows of the summer season; indeed, the competing parties at these

contests are hopelessly out of the running, and know little or nothing of the latest vagaries of fashion : while their displays are often pretty and artistic, they are invariably destitute of the element of novelty so eagerly sought after in society. These are occasions which afford opportunities for a few glass and china firms to advertise themselves by the exhibition of new and expensive services, set off by flowers arranged by a professional decorator ; while provincial young ladies try their prentice hands at simple and effective arrangements, not differing in essentials from what have been shown any time the last twenty years.

The great guns of the table-decorating business—for it *is* a business nowadays—naturally hold aloof. Novelty, novelty, novelty, however *bizarre* and incongruous, is the incessant demand of their customers, and both the florists and the ladies who have taken up decorating professionally are so exercised in their ingenuity to invent new combinations and appliances that they are not likely to give themselves away by wasting the efforts of their genius upon the public which goes to flower-shows at Regent's Park.

The question still remains to be answered how far the expenditure of energy in making a toy-shop of the dinner-table reacts upon the character of the repast provided. The Varus of our Latin Grammar days, who excited the wrath of the satirist by feasting the eye rather than the stomach of his guest, has doubtless his many counterparts in modern society. Yet it would be unreasonable to believe that the greater interest displayed in culinary science of late years has been entirely without effect in the reformation of the average *cuisine*. Schools of cookery count for something, doubtless, in the reforming influences, although, in many cases, their efforts seem rather to be directed towards the turning out of lecturers on cookery than of cooks.

On the whole, it seems as if our modern dinners, while less bulky than those of our grandfathers, may be credited with showing more art in minor details. It is possible, and most old gourmands will insist upon it, that we do not get such noble joints as in the olden days, before the baking-oven usurped the place of the spit and the roasting-jack, and the importation of New Zealand mutton and American beef rendered it a difficult matter to ensure obtaining the genuine product of the Southdown wether and the Scotch ox ; yet the kickshaws, the sweets and side-dishes, which people did not call *entrées* in those days—which then generally

came from the pastrycook's round the corner, and were avoided of prudent people and laughed at by Thackeray and other social satirists—have assuredly been improved out of recognition in the art of their preparation.

We do not, certainly, eat as much as we used to do; or, at any rate, we do not deem it necessary to overpower the guest at our table with the number and the vastness of the dishes which we force upon his notice. The City is always a criterion of high living, and the change which has gradually come about in City dinners is significant of the general reformation. There is a certain club in the neighbourhood of the Royal Exchange which has long enjoyed a unique reputation for its dinners, which are as well esteemed now as in the far-off days of the fifties, although their composition shows a considerable difference. A comparison of recent *menus* with those of thirty or forty years ago, which are preserved in the album—something of a gastronomic curiosity—which is kept under lock and key by the secretary, is instructive. Dining *was* dining in those days, and, when a House Dinner was toward, the City fathers would have thought themselves hardly treated if their bill of fare had not provided at least four soups—two thick and two clear; of fish, six or eight items, at the lowest reckoning; of haunches of venison, saddles of mutton, sirloins of beef, enough for half a dozen dinners of these degenerate days; while of *entrées*, sufficient, so far as numbers go at least, to fill a week's *menus* of the Savoy and Métropole.

We have changed all that, and it is as well, for we probably still eat a great deal more than is good for us; and it is to be hoped that, in course of time and enlightenment, we may come with satisfaction to the luxurious simplicity of 'original' Walker's ideal Christmas dinner—crimped cod, woodcock, and plum-pudding. In the meantime, while we have yet to run the gauntlet of many courses, it is well to bear in mind that the dinner is *the* thing, and that a lavish expenditure in orchids, French dolls, and Palais Royal frivolities, is not inconsistent with economy in the wine-bill and a low standard of achievement in the matter of ices and *entremets*,

THE LION'S TALE.

NEXT time you happen to be passing through Venice, with a sunny afternoon on your hands to spare, just call a cab from the steps at Danieli's, and ask the driver to whisk you round by the back road to the gates of the Arsenal.

I say a cab, not by misadventure, but of malice prepense; for if a late distinguished statesman might import a little poetry into Piccadilly by calling a hansom 'the gondola of London,' why may not an enterprising private citizen, humbly toiling after him at a respectful distance, import a little Western civilisation into the Grand Canal by calling a gondola the hansom of Venice? Similarly, has not what we know as a four-wheeler in dear, dirty old London 'suffered a sea-change' into the form of a *barca* by the banks of the city on the Adriatic? And indeed the quick-witted Venetians themselves have not been slow to perceive the obvious analogy; for the popular humour of the Riva degli Schiavoni has nicknamed the little noiseless screw steamers that ply with passengers between the Piazzetta and (*proh pudor!*) the railway station not only as 'omnibuses' but even as 'tramways.' Such is the march of intellect in these latter times, that Venice has nowadays a mounted police in gondolas, and when a fire breaks out in the labyrinth of canals behind the Frari, the fire-engine on duty is rowed to the spot by a crew of stout boatmen in appropriate uniform.

Once in your gondola, on the lion-hunt intent, you must leave behind the golden glories of St. Mark and the Doge's Palace—leave behind the great red and yellow sails of the calm Lagoon—leave behind the bustling crowd and the pigeons of the Piazza, and plunge at once into the narrow waterways that lead into the heart of the people's Venice. The most striking way to approach the Arsenal indeed is to let your gondolier take you round by the church of St. John and St. Paul—'San Zanipolo' your true-bred Venetian calls it for short—the Westminster Abbey of defunct dogedom, where thirty generations of most illustrious oligarchs sleep in peace with serene dignity under becoming catafalques of solid marble. But to adopt this route you should provide yourself beforehand with a plentiful stock of

moral courage and eau-de-Cologne, for thirty generations of Venetian dirt likewise repose in layers on the muddy bottom, and the air is redolent with the accumulated perfume of fifteen centuries of very imperfect sanitation. The sluggish tide of the Lagoon, and the oars of those poetical but extortionate gondoliers, stir up the festering mass afresh at every turn; so that the romance of the waterways suffers somewhat in real life by the prosaic interposition of that irrepressible sewage question, which all the ingenuity of the most cultured ages has never been able satisfactorily to burke for us. From the banks, young Italy, regenerated Italy, avid of *soldi* as in the days of the Oppressor, swarms forth from narrow dingy lanes and stretches out its imperfectly washen hands, in a clamorous chorus for the copper coinage of good king Umberto. Regardless of whom, with set face and stern, you still pursue the even tenor of your way along those noiseless streets, to an occasional chorus of 'Stali' or 'Premè,' till a sudden swirl of the whishing tide brings the gondola unexpectedly round with a jerk from the Canal della Celestia face to face with the wall of the Arsenal.

A crab-catcher on the bank will hold your boat (and his hat for a sou) as you alight by the door of the famous naval station. At the outer entrance of that sleepy old dock stands the veritable lion whose tale I desire to-day to unfold to you. A marble lion, of antique, not to say archaic, workmanship, he has stood there on guard for two hundred years, with three companions dozing by his side, to watch over the navy of the dead republic and the nascent kingdom of united Italy. But he is by no means by birth a stone of Venice; his origin points to far other days and other manners. As everybody knows, and as an elegant Latin inscription on his base in fact sets forth—I almost scorn to translate it in these latter days, when even ladies lisp to their babes in the purest Ciceronian—he was brought with his three companions from the Piræus in 1687 by the victorious fleet of Doge Francesco Morosini. One of the big beasts mounted guard over the harbour itself; his companion stood beside the Sacred Way that led from Piræus to the city of Athens. But what is oddest of all about this particular lion—the first to the left in front of the massive old fifteenth century gateway—is the fact that his body is covered irregularly with strange inscriptions, some of them running in a circle round his shoulders, and others sprawling at irregular distances along his lordly flanks and magnificent haunches.

And what is the language, ancient or modern, in which these casual and extremely serpentine inscriptions are couched? Ah, there's the rub. There comes the point which throws at once such a lurid glamour of romance and mystery about that grim archaic beast, once the foremost ornament of the harbour of the Piræus, and now the guardian of King Umberto's new-born navy. The letters, if letters indeed they be, are rude and weather-worn; time and rain have almost obliterated them; scarce a single form stands out clear and definite; only a general vague sense of something written now remains of what was once, no doubt, to somebody somewhere a legible and highly valuable inscription. But to modern science and modern archæology the lion's story was for many long years a dead secret. Every key was tried in vain. The rude marks on the stone obstinately displayed their native rudeness by refusing to answer any polite inquiries as to their origin and meaning: 'What's that to you?' they retorted mutely. They declined to come out as Egyptian hieroglyphics; they refrained from exhibiting themselves as Babylonian cuneiform; they wouldn't even permit themselves to be dexterously twisted, after the fashion of philologists—for we must all admit that in philology much can be done by ingenious twisting—into Accadian ideograms or Chinese metaphysics. Read forward or backward or upside down they were equally incorrigible. They listened not to the voice of the polyglot charmer, charmed he never so conjecturally and wisely. At last one day a wandering Scandinavian scholar passed that way—one Raft of Copenhagen—and, casting a glance at the mysterious marks, thought he recognised some familiar touch about their curves and angles. He went to work at them with zeal and discretion, and, lo, in the end, it turned out to everybody's immense surprise that the writing on the lion—that Athenian lion, the glory of the Piræus, the brother beast of the guardian of the Sacred Way—was in good Norse runes of the eleventh century!

Now it is this that to my mind gives the lion of the Arsenal such a special and very peculiar interest among all the storied stones of Venice. That he should have come originally from Athens indeed is in itself nothing very remarkable; the noble Venetians of the days of the most serene Republic were such an unmitigated set of thieves and robbers that nothing artistic anywhere came amiss to them. All was fish to the net of the Doges. Since the days when that exemplary noble Roman Mummius

stripped Corinth of its marble statues, the flower of Greek art, and then informed the bargees whom he hired to carry his plunder to Rome that if they broke any by the way they must replace them themselves with others of equal value, there were never surely such desperate spoilers and robbers of churches as those pious Venetians. All Venice, in fact, is one vast museum of stolen property. A self-righteous inscription over the gateway of St. Mark's informs the visitor, with much show of conscious probity, that the four famous antique bronze horses above the portal, 'removed by the rapacity of the enemy to Paris' under Napoleon I., were again restored to their proper place by that incorruptible champion of strict international morality, the Emperor Francis. But that glorious team, a work of the sculptors of the Neronian age, had previously been stolen in the thirteenth century by the Doge Dandolo from Constantinople, whither they had been carried from Rome, for his own glorification, by Constantine the Great, who had filched them himself from the triumphal arch of Trajan, who in turn had borrowed them, as seems probable, from the similar monument of his predecessor Nero. Such are the humours of the world and the whirligigs of time. Indeed, if every man had his own again, one might almost say there would be no Venice. The column of St. Mark with its winged lion would go back to Syria; the square pillars by the Doge's Palace would return once more to St. Saba, at Ptolemais; the alabaster supports of the inner canopy would find their way back, men say, to Solomon's temple; and even the mouldering body of the Evangelist itself, which reposes beneath its pall of gold and jewels below the high altar, would have to migrate to the community from whom it was first filched, the Coptic Christians of Alexandria.

But apart from the common epic of conquest and robbery which every Venetian relic thus encloses in itself, as of ordinary custom, there is something exceptionally and specifically impressive, to my mind at least, in the marvel of this lion of the Arsenal door—a sculptured figure that thus brings together for a moment, in incongruous juxtaposition on the shores of the Adriatic, the highest culture of Periclean Athens and the rude barbarism of the Danish invaders. Surely such a singular combination as this—the names of Harold and Ulf and other fierce rovers of the stormy Baltic cut deep on a carved work of the pre-Phidian Greek period on the bays of the Ægean—may give us pause for a moment in our gondola on

the mud-banks of the Brenta, and cause us to wonder, as the poet wondered of the flies in amber, 'how the dickens they got there.'

Let us try to answer this curious question.

The lions of the Arsenal were originally carved, as the grain of the stone clearly indicates, from two solid blocks of the marble of Pentelicus. The place itself from which they came is not without interest in the history of their wanderings, for to the marble of Pentelicus, I verily believe, the world owes in no little degree the artistic development of the Athenian people. 'It was a gift of the gods to men,' says Mr. Andrew Lang, with poetic vagueness, speaking of the marvellous development of the Athenian intellect and the Athenian æsthetic faculties in the age immediately preceding the era of Pericles. Well, perhaps so; on that point we have no specific information; but, as far as art is concerned, at least, I think it was also, in great part, a gift of the neighbouring quarries of Pentelicus. It did not count for nothing in the history of their culture that just outside their city walls the Athenians had that mass of metamorphosed crystalline limestone, altered by the earth's internal heat into pure white marble. As Egypt based herself upon granite, and Babylon upon brick, so Athens based herself upon the Pentelican quarries. Now granite is not precisely what a man might call a plastic material. I doubt if even Phidias himself could have carved a satisfactory Zeus or Aphrodite from the red rock of Syene that gave us so many stark, stiff Pashts and Memnons. But with marble men may do almost anything they like, and it was on marble of Pentelicus that Athens raised all the countless glories of the Theseum and the Acropolis.

Some day or other, then, presumably about the fifth or sixth century before Christ, some nameless Athenian sculptor carved out of that stone this identical lion, which his countrymen placed at the gate of the Piræus to guard the harbour against the Spartan fleet and all other outlanders. For twenty-two centuries, more or less, those twin lions kept guard over Athens, one at the Piræus, one on the Sacred Way that led from the port to the City of the Violet Crown. All through the Middle Ages, indeed, the Piræus itself was known to the Italian traders who frequented it as the Porto Leone, the Lion's Harbour; and as such the Frankish merchants knew it almost to the beginning of the present century, when antiquarian zeal for Hellenic tradition revived once more the older name. But what changes did not the lion see

meanwhile! The fall of the Athenian Empire, the Spartan supremacy, the hegemony of Thebes, the Macedonian dominion, Philip and Alexander, the reigns of the Successors, the Achæan league, the Roman conquest, the empire of the Cæsars, the advent of new creeds, the Parthenon turned into a Christian church, the seat of civilisation transferred from Rome to a brand-new metropolis on the Byzantine Strait! And then, the long decline of the Empire, the growth of Islam, the inroads of the barbarian, the pressing danger from the Saracen and the Turk. It was in these later days that the romance of the runes was imposed upon the lion of the Piræus mouth, and that Harold Hardrada, who finally lost his life fighting against our own English Harold at Stamford Bridge, piloted his piratical Norse long-boats on another man's quarrel to the port of Athens.

And how strange was the fate that thus brought a Norwegian rover of the age of William the Conqueror into personal contact with Periclean Athens! Harold the Tall, son of Sigurd, nicknamed Hardrada—he of the hard rede, or the stern counsel—was a typical Norse viking of the Berserker order—a man after Carlyle's own heart, I should fancy. A soldier of fortune of the rollicking, buccaneering Danish mould, a Drake or Hawkins of the eleventh century, Harold went round the world in his hot youth in quest of adventure, seeking whom he might devour, killing impartially heathen or Christian, and for conscience' sake asking no questions. In the year of our Lord 1040 this doughty leader found himself in the Mediterranean on one of his usual marauding expeditions. Those were the days when the Scandinavian corsairs played on all seas the selfsame game played later round the southern shores of Europe by their Paynim successors, the Barbary pirates. In all the churches of Christendom the strange litany then went daily up to heaven from thousands and thousands of frightened lips, 'A furore Normannorum libera nos, Domine,' 'From all savage assaults of the Northmen, good Lord, deliver us.' Everywhere the Northern pirate was busily poking his obtrusive nose. A century earlier Rolf the Ganger had walked over Neustria, and turned the fairest provinces of the Frankish king into his dukedom of Normandy, the Northman's land. At that very moment in England itself the descendants of Swegen the Dane had superseded the old native West-Saxon line, and another Harold of the Danish stock was ruling over the citizens of London and Winchester. Before long the Norman was to lord it over Sicily, to

humble the pride of the Moor in Spain, and to wrest Apulia from the feeble grasp of the Byzantine empire. The Scandinavian then, in short, was bullying the world, as the filibustering Englishman bullies it now in Australasia and South Africa, in the Pacific Islands and the forests of New Guinea.

So Harold Hardrada, like some prototypical Stanley, or Drake, or Wakefield, was cruising about in search of adventure on his own account in the eastern seas. Just at that moment, as chance would have it, the Athenian people, ever in search of some new thing, had revolted from the sway of their liege lord, the Emperor Michael IV., at Constantinople, and the astute Byzantine, playing the familiar old imperial game of utilising the barbarian against insurgent subjects, bethought him of employing the Berserker chief to bring back the Athenians to their obedience to Cæsar. The runes on the lion of the Venetian Arsenal tell the story of what followed in their own simple piratical way. The tale is short, but, like all that the Northmen wrote, it is very pithy.

‘Hakon, with Ulf, Asmund, and Orm, conquered this port,’ says the brief inscription on the lion’s left shoulder. ‘By command of Harold the Tall they levied a contribution on the Greek people, on account of their revolt. Dalk has been detained in outlandish parts. Egil, with Ragnar, was dealing war in Roumania and Armenia.’

The sinuous lines on the left shoulder tell an equally simple and graphic story. ‘Asmund engraved these runes,’ it says, ‘with the help of Asgeir, Thorleif, Thord, and Ivar, by command of Harold the Tall, in spite of the strenuous opposition of the Greeks.’

Could anything be more delightfully concise and natural? How we see the whole picture called up in vivid colours before our very eyes—the savage Norse seadogs, with their short, sharp swords, brought face to face by the irony of fate with the last degenerate descendants of the Athenian freemen; the battle in the port; the defeat of the Greeks; the levying of the Danegeld; the submission of the conquered. Then the easy-going pirates, good Philistine souls—ancestors doubtless of our British ‘Arry—unconscious of the desecration of art they are so lightly committing, insist in the innocent pride of their hearts upon scrawling the record of their grand achievement on the shoulders of the antique lion himself, the immemorial guardian of the ancient Piræus. Fancy the speechless horror and futile remonstrances of

the scandalised Greeks, with the businesslike determination of Asmund and Thorleif to carve their names in very choice Norwegian on the sculptured stone, whether the Athenians would or whether they would not! The entire scene breathes fresh and lively before us. We can see the breathless alarm and horror of the art-loving Hellenes, contrasted with the bland and childlike persistence of the triumphant barbarian to do as he liked in a conquered country. If I were a great painter—say, for example, Mr. Alma Tadema—I would paint that episode in deathless colours; as I'm not, I'm glad at any rate that Asmund gained himself a 'cheap immortality' by painting it for us in good Scandinavian letters.

When the deed of vandalism was finally done, Harold the Tall sailed away from Piræus in due time, and two years later, after the wont of the barbarian, deposed his employer, the Emperor Michael V., from his *fainéant* throne, and (having an eye for the ladies) set up in his place Zoe and Theodora as joint empresses of the Eastern Empire. It was not till twenty-six years afterwards that the tough old pirate fell at last at Stamford Bridge, a few weeks before the battle of Hastings, fighting hard against Harold of England in favour of his traitor brother Tostig. But men might come and men might go; the disfigured lion, with the usual immortality of sculptured stone, still kept its place by the Lion's Port, with the runes that Asmund, Thord, and Thorleif had carved so well scored deep for ever upon its dishonoured shoulders.

Meanwhile, strange things were happening in the world. On the tidal sandbanks and mudbanks of the Adriatic, where the silt of Po, Adige, and Brenta had been washed by the waves into a long narrow barrier, enclosing a shallow and interrupted lagoon, with its attendant archipelago of low alluvial islands, this city of Venice, in a deserted palace on whose Grand Canal I am this moment inditing this present article, had already risen a few hundred years earlier, by slow and tentative steps, to local sovereignty. When Attila the Hun invaded Italy, and wiped out Aquileia, Padua, and Altinum, the terrified people of the neighbouring coast fled in panic from the barbarian who boasted that where his horse had once set its hoof no blade of grass grew afterwards. But they fled where no horse could ever tread or has ever trodden; and they founded that city, whose bride is the sea, whose streets are streams, and whose carriages are gondolas. Here, in

later times, at the open gate between the Frankish and Byzantine empires, the most serene Republic slowly grew great and prospered exceedingly. Circumstances early brought the inhabitants of the mudbanks into close connection with the Piræus and the Lion. From the very first, indeed, the Venetians lived under the most exalted protection of the Byzantine empire; and though they early made themselves independent, in fact, of that phantom control, they continued still to trade with the Levant and to keep on the very best of terms with their old masters, till the time came when they conquered them in turn, and 'held the gorgeous East in fee' for so many centuries of commercial splendour.

Even after blind Doge Dandolo conquered Constantinople, however, and his successors annexed the Morea and a large part of continental Greece, the lion of the Piræus still remained undisturbed on its ancient pedestal. The Turk had now appeared upon the scene and completed the downfall of the tottering empire; but still the lion, with its runic scars, watched on unmolested by the deserted harbour. At last, in 1687, while Newton at Cambridge was publishing his 'Principia,' and King James at Oxford was carefully preparing his own downfall by expelling the fellows of Magdalen from their comfortable cloisters, far away in the gorgeous East Doge Francesco Morosini, fighting those ancestral enemies of his race, the Turks, for the temporary lordship over that shuttlecock of Levantine strategy, the Morea, successfully defeated the Moslem fleets, and made the Peloponnesus once more for a time a Venetian possession. Coming then to the Piræus with his victorious ships, the enterprising Doge, like a true Venetian, with the honour of St. Mark nearest his heart, kept his eyes open for what treasures of art he could lay his hands upon most conveniently and convey to Venice. Thus employed, his inquiring glance fell naturally on the twin lions of the Piræus and the Sacred Way. The Doge, being human, immediately appropriated those glories of the past, and sent them off by sea to Venice. There they were set up by the gate of the arsenal, where whoso lists may see them to-day, and spell out the inscription legibly for himself, if he happens to be acquainted with the polite language of the eleventh century Scandinavian corsairs.

To me, no story that ever was told points more plainly to the unity and continuity of history than this curious story of the lion of the Arsenal. It has such a weird touch of mystery and uncanniness about it. That in the midst of Venice, mediæval

Venice, with its Byzantine churches and its Gothic palaces, its Italian mosaics and its Lombard sculptures, one should suddenly come across a piece of genuine Athenian statuary, scratched over with Norse runes by fierce marauders from the banks of the Baltic, is in itself to my mind little short of a living miracle. That the runes should have been deciphered at all at last, and should have yielded up to later man the story of their origin, while it detracts a trifle perhaps from the sense of mystery, adds surely to the romantic picturesqueness of the story. If you have never yet visited the lion of the Arsenal, visit it now, next time you are in Venice, for its own sake; if you have seen it already, but only knew in part its strange history, visit it afresh by this new light, and look upon its shoulders with the eye of faith for those very words carved deep into its weather-worn Pentelican marble by the rough graving tools of the Scandinavian pirate.

THE LAST OF THE CALVERTS.

I REMEMBER hearing at first hand a characteristic story of the famous Mrs. Fletcher of Lancrigg, whose beautiful face the readers of her autobiography will remember as immortalised at the age of eighty by the elder Richmond.

She had been very ill, but was recovering, when she heard that Mazzini was in London; and against the counsel of her friends, who feared the journey and the excitement for her, she determined to go up to London and to be present at a public breakfast given in his honour. 'But you have no bonnet; you cannot appear in that hood!' they urged. 'I will have a bonnet for the occasion,' was her rejoinder; and straightway word was despatched to a milliner in London to have a bonnet, 'suitable for an old lady of eighty,' made and forwarded to Euston Station to meet her on arrival by the night train. The bonnet was made and despatched, and the brave old lady, whose heart never grew old, travelled up to town to find her bonnet in waiting. 'And,' said Mrs. Fletcher, 'what do you think, my dear, I found when I opened the bonnet-box; a bright yellow satin bonnet with a yellow lancer's plume in it! I was determined not to miss Mazzini, so I put it on, never looked in the glass, went to the breakfast, and forgot all about my bonnet for the time being; but after breakfast I drove straight to the milliner's and said, I dare say a little angrily, "How could you send me such a thing as this? I asked for a bonnet for an old lady of eighty!" "Madam," replied the milliner, "we have no old ladies of eighty in London."'

The moral of the story is plainly this, that it is not in the rush and crush of town that such a beautiful old age as Mrs. Fletcher's was can be found, but in the quiet of just such a house as she made for herself at our English Lakes.

It is thanks to the same beneficent quietude of hill and vale, that until a few weeks ago there were still living in the Keswick and Ambleside valleys two ladies whose lives linked us to the days of the historic Lake school of poets and philosophers.

Black February of 1890 will be remembered by many as the month that broke those links. Those who cared to speak face to face with hearts that had known and honoured the family circles

at Greta Hall and Rydal Mount henceforth are debarred the privilege.

Mrs. Joshua Stanger, of Fieldside, Keswick, and Mrs. Harrison, of Green Bank, or Scale How, Ambleside, were the last of their generation.

And if the former, in actual mental activity and intellectual sympathy with the Lake poets of old, was the more remarkable, there were in both of them, to the end, wonderful vitality, clear memory, and that kind of genial response to the sympathies for the times that are gone, that made them in their several ways most interesting repositories of a memorable past. They each of them felt that to them, as the last survivors in the locality who had been admitted to the arcana of the Greta Hall and Rydal Mount history, a younger generation might naturally turn for reminiscences, and they neither of them allowed those recollections to grow dim.

They had been schoolfellows in the olden times together, and whether under Miss Fletcher or Miss Dowling, of Bellevue, the little Mary Calvert and the elder Dorothy Wordsworth had learnt lessons of geniality and benevolence I know not, but this I know, that for the past half-century and more the towns of Keswick and Ambleside have felt that no public work could go forward for the good of the people that did not at once commend itself to these ladies and obtain their aid; while in them the deserving poor knew ever would be found a very present help in time of trouble.

It was a day of exceptional beauty, when Mrs. Stanger lay breathing painlessly to sleep in that beautiful home, high-lifted above her native valley, to which she had entered in the year that her old friend Robert Southey died.

Helvellyn was absolutely snowless and shadowless, one long ridge of tawny yellow and sunshine; the Lonscale Fell was clad in purple puce of heather waking into life; the larches on Latrigg—her father's Latrigg—were visibly turning into the amber glow that heralds the spring; snowdrops and crocuses and aconite were bright upon the terrace beds; tits and finches were busy in the garden grounds; rooks cawed from the sycamores; a thrush sang loud, and down below in its wooded gorge the Greta sounded cheerily towards 'the Forge.' But Mrs. Stanger lay dying.

And from the 'Druid Circle' above her house, as far as one could see, whether one looked southward by the Vale of St. John's, or north and west by wild Blencathra's steeps and the spring of

Thorold the Dane, or gazed out west over the wide expanse of the Keswick Valley, one felt that not 'glad' but 'sad' 'were the vales and every cottage hearth'—with a sadness no light on laughing Derwentwater could disavow, no happy cockerow in the distant farms or busy murmur of the little town below could charm away. The friend of the poor was passing from the earth.

Just now we spoke of the Greta sounding towards 'the Forge.' That Forge, until the 'Ronndhead' cavaliers laid it in ashes, was one of the principal 'blomaries' or smelting furnaces for copper ore in the Keswick Vale.

And we are not a little indebted to its existence. Had there been no Forge set up there in the mining times of great Elizabeth, we should have had no family of Calverts to bless the Vale; no little Mary Calvert whose memory we think of fondly as we write.

For in 1565, on the application of Thomas Thurland, and one Daniel Hechstetter, a German, the Queen granted a warrant by which three hundred Almain or German miners should be brought over into Cumberland to work the mines in the Lake district. The analysts of that date were not over skilful; they assured the Queen that the black mica schist Frobisher brought from the Arctic regions was rich in gold, and here in the Keswick Vale they were probably not much more correct in asserting that there was more gold and silver than copper and lead in the stuff that was smelted at 'the Forge.' They did assert it, with the result that the Queen claimed the mines in the valley as hers, against the Earl of Northumberland, and won her suit; and we still speak of the Goldscope mine of Newlands, though precious little gold has ever been scooped therefrom. This by the way. Meanwhile, the much ill-treated and little welcomed colony¹ of German and Dutch miners, Hechstetters, Pughbargers, Clockers, Mosers, Tiffiers, Beyrnparkers, Sanningers, Hedglers, Norspalmers, Torvers, Sinogles, Cayruses, and the rest, settled down by the River Greta and hewed away the Hammer Hole above 'the Forge' for the mill-race, and occupied the banks for a smelting station (perhaps pre-occupied by the Romans and Vikings aforetime)—right away from 'the Forge' to the present Calvert Bridge.

Amongst 'the rest' spoken of above came Stangers, Ritselers,

¹ *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmoreland Archaeological Society*, vol. vi., Pt. II., p. 344. 'The Colony of German miners at Keswick,' by J. Fisher Crosthwaite, F.S.A.

and Calverts. The former German certainly; I have doubts about the nationality of the latter, for at Whitby and elsewhere in Yorkshire the name appears unassociated with German mining operations.

The old Crosthwaite registers of 1567 and onwards show us that these Ritselers became Rystlers, Raysells, Raysings, Raisleys, in a very swift change. The Cumbrian could not in parlance cope with 'Ritseler,' and could easily pronounce the word 'Raisley.'

At the end of last century we find that Mr. William Calvert, a steward of the Duke of Norfolk, is resident at the old farmhouse beneath Latrigg, on the banks of the Greta, Windybrow—Greta Bank of to-day. He had held the post of ensign in the Duke of Norfolk's Regiment, a militia regiment, in which the Duke threw up his commission because the Government called attention to certain toasts at a military dinner. It is possible that Calvert after that laid his sword and epaulettes aside and devoted himself heart and soul to agriculture. At any rate, he is at Keswick, and has taken to experimental farming on his own account. His younger brother, Raisley, at this period seems to have stayed sometimes at Penrith, sometimes at Windybrow with him.

It is more than probable that friendship with the Wordsworth family had been contracted in the former generation. The poet's father, as Lord Lonsdale's agent, would surely often come across old Mr. Raisley Calvert, the agent of the Duke of Norfolk and steward of his property at Greystoke. Be that as it may, we find Wordsworth in the Calverts' company as fellow traveller in the Isle of Wight and over Salisbury Plain in 1793. Young Raisley has left Cambridge, is in a decline, and on the look-out for milder air, and has already found in Wordsworth a friend after his own heart.

In the next year, 1794, we find Wordsworth at the farmhouse of Windybrow, anxiously writing to his friend Mathews to see if there is any chance of his obtaining work in connection with a London newspaper. He has resolved not to become a clergyman, he has neither money nor will to become an attorney, and the young poet, with all the burning desire to give his whole soul to the service of man as a poet, is at his wits' end to know how to earn sufficient bread for himself and his 'dear, dear sister's' simple needs, to enable him to pursue the vocation which he feels Heaven has designed for him.

The young man, Raisley Calvert, with whom Wordsworth had had but little connection before, but whom now he dared to call his friend, was at Windybrow, and evidently worsening. If only he can go to the south, and get a whiff of Lisbon air and bask in Lisbon sunshine, surely he feels strength may be re-born and his days may be lengthened! Will Wordsworth accompany him?

One of the most memorable letters in Wordsworth's handwriting it has been my privilege to see, sets forth to his (Raisley's) elder brother, William, the ensign in the militia, then in quarters at Newcastle, the project of this journey to the south.

He writes from Keswick on October 1, 1794, and speaks of Raisley's illness. He asks William Calvert 'whether it will not raise him in his own estimation' if he shall see his way to make such an allowance as would permit him—Wordsworth—to accompany young Raisley, the invalid, to Portugal; and then in very manly and courteous language he goes on to tell him that, in event of Raisley's decease, Raisley has so arranged his money matters as to bequeath him 600*l.*, and he trusts that neither the leaver of the legacy nor the interested recipient of it will fall in William Calvert's estimation by reason of the fact which he thinks it only right to make thus known to him. Nay, he makes it known at Raisley's request, 'who, reflecting that his return from the projected journey to Lisbon is uncertain, had drawn out his will, which he intends to get executed in London.'

Wordsworth, in the month following, writes to Mathews from Keswick under date November 7, 1794: 'My friend has every symptom of a confirmed consumption, and I cannot think of quitting him in his present debilitated state.' It is quite plain that the project of the trip to the south was given up, and we find Wordsworth back again in the spring of 1795, still tenderly nursing the young Raisley. He writes on January 5 from Mrs. Sowerby's lodgings, at the sign of the 'Robin Hood' at Penrith: 'I have been here for some time: I am still much engaged with my sick friend; and sorry am I to add that he worsens daily—he is barely alive.'

When Raisley Calvert's will was opened, it was found he had bequeathed 900*l.*, not 600*l.* as promised, to the friend of his life's eventide—the friend who he believed would be a 'morning star' of song for the days that were to be.

For the next eight years the poet and his sister lived secured from want, till such time as Lord Lowther repaid to his father's estate the 8,500*l.* borrowed by the old Lord Lonsdale years before. And, in a letter to Mrs. Stanger's husband in 1842, Wordsworth says: 'It may be satisfactory to your wife for me to declare that my friend's bequest enabled me to devote myself to literary pursuits independent of any necessity to seek out pecuniary emolument, so that my talents, such as they might be, were free to take their natural course.'

I had often wondered what it was that attracted the death-stricken young Raisley Calvert to the serious-minded, solemn-natured elder man whom he seems to have chosen as companion for the last few years, or months rather, of his life. That wonder ceased when I read in Raisley's strongish, boldish hand, a letter to his brother William, from Cambridge, giving him his reason for refusing to remain at Cambridge longer than for the first few weeks of his first term, and setting forth his determination to pass over to the Continent, and there educate himself by travel, rather than waste his money and his time in the idle dissipation and swagger of dress that passed for education in his day at the great University.

He was not only disgusted at the sham and the show, but he had also gauged his own powers. A degree worth the name was not, he thought, attainable with such proficiency as was his in certain lines of study. He would ask for a draft to pay his tailor's bill and his tutor's fee, and would shake the dust of Cambridge from off his feet for ever, and that speedily.

I may be wrong, but I fancied I saw beneath that young lad's rugged, forcible handwriting a feeling that the world men should strive to live in was reality, sincerity, simplicity. I suspect he recognised, as those foredoomed to early death seem able to recognise, by a wisdom that cometh from above, that life worth the name was a life of usefulness to one's fellows. He found in Wordsworth the serious earnestness he believed in, and, not being himself a poet, he could still see how true poesy, and tender thought, and earnest endeavour in fields of philosophic musing might help his time; and so he determined to make it possible for Wordsworth to realise his aim. 'The act' of Raisley's benefaction, wrote Wordsworth to Sir George Beaumont in 1805, 'was due entirely from a confidence on his part that I had powers and attainments which might be of use to mankind.' Had it not been

for that act, England might never have known her Wordsworth, for truly sang the poet with heartfelt gratitude :

Calvert ! it must not be unheard by them
 Who may respect my name, that I to thee
 Owed many years of early liberty.
 This care was thine when sickness did condemn
 Thy youth to hopeless wasting, root and stem,
 That I, if frugal and severe, might stray
 Where'er I liked, and finally array
 My temples with the Muses' diadem.

William Calvert must have married, soon after his brother Raisley's death, a Miss Mitchinson, of an honoured and well-known Cumbrian family, and we find him rebuilding the old farmhouse high up above the sounding river, in sight of the Forge at which his Elizabethan ancestor may have laboured with honour and profit. Already he is the good genius of the whole place—fast friend with Coleridge, lately domiciled at Greta Hall, and determined to turn the dreamy philosopher into a practical chemist.

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No sooner had Southey come to Greta Hall, as he did in 1803, than we find him friends with Calvert ; and interesting it is to trace, as one may through Southey's life and letters, how on any great political emergency the friends are closeted to discuss the affairs of the nation. Now Calvert will come down to Greta Hall to crack a bottle with Southey over some unexpected bit of good

news from the Peninsula ; now Southey will go up to Windybrow to meet Mr. Curwen and Lord Lonsdale to arrange the terms of an address from the electors of Cumberland, or to spar with James Brougham over questions of Whig impudence and Tory morality. But I think one gets the best picture of Calvert from Shelley.

Shelley, without a penny in his pocket and plenty of pride in his heart, had accepted an invitation to Greystoke Park, December 1, 1811. He had been at Mr. Dare's house, Chesnut Hill, for about a fortnight, having removed thither from Mr. D. Cross-thwaite's, of Town Head. As yet he knew nobody in the district ; Southey had not called, nor Mr. Calvert, though I expect that if only Calvert had heard of those terrible goings on and the will-o'-the-wisp dances with thistle-tubes and hydrogen gas that took place in Mr. Dare's garden after dark, he would have already claimed the young poet for his chemic brotherhood at Windybrow. But Calvert had been seen ; his 'particular look' had struck 'Harriet' Shelley when they met him in the mountains. And now, among the Duke of Norfolk's guests at Greystoke, this same Calvert made an indelible impression. 'He knows everything that relates to my family and to myself—my expulsion from Oxford, the opinions that caused it, are no secrets to him,' writes Shelley to Miss Hitchener on December 26, 1811. 'He is an elderly man, and the expression of his face, whenever I held the arguments, which I do everywhere, was such as I shall not readily forget. I shall have more to tell of him.'

Shelley soon had more to tell of him, it was a tale of benevolence. 'The rent of our cottage was two guineas and a half a week, with linen provided ; he has made the proprietor lower it to one guinea, and has lent us linen himself.'

Calvert not only showed him kindness, but, acting on the Duke of Norfolk's hint, got others in the neighbourhood to call on the runaway couple, who played like kittens round the garden plots of Chesnut Hill by day, and made hydrogen gas in retorts on the lawn at night.

He did more, he invited Shelley to Windybrow, and there introduced him to Robert Southey. 'We first,' writes Shelley, 'met Southey at his house.'

We must take leave of Shelley and think of Mr. Calvert, now busy with his chemicals, now with politics, and interested beyond other matters in experimental farming. There was a famine in the land. It behoved every good man and true to grow corn for

the people, and, availing himself for a very public-spirited purpose, of the 'Commons Enclosure Act,' he obtained the right to enclose Latrigg Common, and, in 1814, ran a plough over its barren top and strove, though unavailingly, to reap a harvest from the lofty burial-place of Briton and Norseman of old time.

The corn ripened slowly, growing as it did at the height of 1,200 feet above the sea, and ere it could be harvested winter rains set in.

But the generations since that time, to the memorable 'Right of Way' case of our day, have blessed Calvert for the good and easy path he made to the marvellous panorama as seen from the ridge of Lathar the Dane; and generations yet unborn who travel the same road may think of the benevolence which prompted the Latrigg tiller's deed, and may mourn for the loss of fortune that that experiment and others of an agricultural kind, undertaken in the name of science and the public good, caused the worthy man.

Of Mrs. Calvert one hears little; but she, too, had a heart for her neighbours' weal. The most amusing of all Southey's 'Cat' letters to Grosvenor Bedford describes the advent to Greta Hall of 'The Zombi,' whose sudden screams from Wilsey's cellar in the early morning so terrified the household that it obliged Southey to inquire of his friend, who 'knew more of cat nature than had ever been attained by the most profound naturalist,' whether Zombi had seen the devil, or was he making love to himself, or was he engaged in single combat with himself, or was he attempting to raise the devil by invocation, or had he heard him—Southey—sing, and was he attempting vainly to imitate him.

'Othello' had died at Greta Hall. Since that lamented event the house was cat-less, 'till on Saturday, March 24, 1821, Mrs. Calvert, knowing how grievously we were annoyed by rats, offered me what she described as a fine full-grown black cat, who was moreover a Tom. She gave him an excellent character in all points but one, which was that he was a most expert pigeon-catcher; and as they had a pigeon-house, this propensity rendered it necessary to pass sentence upon him either of transportation or of death. 'Moved,' continues Southey in his solemnest strain, 'by compassion (his colour and his Tomship also being taken into consideration), I consented to give him an asylum, and on the evening of that day here he came in a sack. . . .'

At the unanimous desire of the children, I took upon myself the charge of providing him with a name, for it is not proper that

a cat should remain without one. Taking into consideration his complexion, as well as his sex, my first thought was to call him Henrique Diaz, a name which poor Koster would have approved, had he been living to have heard it; but it presently occurred to me that 'the Zombi'—the title of the chief of the Palmares negroes—would be an appellation equally appropriate and more dignified. 'The Zombi,' therefore, he was named.'

Mrs. Calvert was a clever housewife, and as she was blessed with an ingenious husband, whose motto was 'never do to-day what can be put off till to-morrow,' one can guess what comfort, in matters domestic, she found in intercourse with the methodical go-by-clock-work household at Greta Hall.

But the ties that bound the Greta houses in closest alliance were neither politics, nor chemistry, nor cats—they were the young children. The Greta Hall children and the Windybrowites were inseparable; and what a remarkable company they were. Edith Southey, with her lithe figure, her round rosy face, and her fair hair; Isabel, the fiery; Kate, the dark-eyed and garrulous; Bertha, the brave and the bluff; Sara Coleridge, with her delicate pale beauty and her marvellous eyes; and Dora Wordsworth, from over the Raise—for she often came for a visit—Dora with her swift impetuous movements, her flashing eye and her heavy yellow locks; and last, but not least noticeable, the grey-eyed, merry little only daughter of Greta Bank, Mary Calvert.

While the boys were quaint Job or Hartley Coleridge, the thinker; plumpy Derwent, the brother, with his solemn lisp; Herbert Southey, the adorable, too soon to pass away; and then the young Calverts—John, and Raisley, and William.

Of these latter, alas! with his birth in one must have been born the seeds of that same fatal disorder that had carried off his uncle Raisley Calvert. But what a fine nature had been thus born to languish and pass away in the prime of manhood we may gather from Sterling's letter to Charles Barton, dated Funchal, Madeira, March 3rd, 1838, as quoted in Carlyle's life of Sterling: 'I have now come to live with a friend, a Dr. Calvert, in a small house of our own. He is about my age, an Oriel man, and a very superior person.'

'Among the English,' says Carlyle, 'in pursuit of health, or in flight from fatal disease, that winter, was this Dr. Calvert; about Sterling's age, and in a deeper stage of ailment, this not being his first visit to Madeira, he, warmly joining himself to Sterling, as

for that act, England might never have known her Wordsworth, for truly sang the poet with heartfelt gratitude :

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We must take leave of Shelley and think of Mr. Calvert, now busy with his chemicals, now with politics, and interested beyond other matters in experimental farming. There was a famine in the land. It behoved every good man and true to grow corn for

the people, and, availing himself for a very public-spirited purpose, of the 'Commons Enclosure Act,' he obtained the right to enclose Latrigg Common, and, in 1814, ran a plough over its barren top and strove, though unavailingly, to reap a harvest from the lofty burial-place of Briton and Norseman of old time.

The corn ripened slowly, growing as it did at the height of 1,200 feet above the sea, and ere it could be harvested winter rains set in.

But the generations since that time, to the memorable 'Right of Way' case of our day, have blessed Calvert for the good and easy path he made to the marvellous panorama as seen from the ridge of Lathar the Dane; and generations yet unborn who travel the same road may think of the benevolence which prompted the Latrigg tiller's deed, and may mourn for the loss of fortune that that experiment and others of an agricultural kind, undertaken in the name of science and the public good, caused the worthy man.

Of Mrs. Calvert one hears little; but she, too, had a heart for her neighbours' weal. The most amusing of all Southey's 'Cat' letters to Grosvenor Bedford describes the advent to Greta Hall of 'The Zombi,' whose sudden screams from Wilsey's cellar in the early morning so terrified the household that it obliged Southey to inquire of his friend, who 'knew more of cat nature than had ever been attained by the most profound naturalist,' whether Zombi had seen the devil, or was he making love to himself, or was he engaged in single combat with himself, or was he attempting to raise the devil by invocation, or had he heard him—Southey—sing, and was he attempting vainly to imitate him.

'Othello' had died at Greta Hall. Since that lamented event the house was cat-less, 'till on Saturday, March 24, 1821, Mrs. Calvert, knowing how grievously we were annoyed by rats, offered me what she described as a fine full-grown black cat, who was moreover a Tom. She gave him an excellent character in all points but one, which was that he was a most expert pigeon-catcher; and as they had a pigeon-house, this propensity rendered it necessary to pass sentence upon him either of transportation or of death. 'Moved,' continues Southey in his solemnest strain, 'by compassion (his colour and his Tomship also being taken into consideration), I consented to give him an asylum, and on the evening of that day here he came in a sack. . . .'

At the unanimous desire of the children, I took upon myself the charge of providing him with a name, for it is not proper that

a cat should remain without one. Taking into consideration his complexion, as well as his sex, my first thought was to call him Henrique Diaz, a name which poor Koster would have approved, had he been living to have heard it; but it presently occurred to me that 'the Zombi'—the title of the chief of the Palmares negroes—would be an appellation equally appropriate and more dignified. 'The Zombi,' therefore, he was named.'

Mrs. Calvert was a clever housewife, and as she was blessed with an ingenious husband, whose motto was 'never do to-day what can be put off till to-morrow,' one can guess what comfort, in matters domestic, she found in intercourse with the methodical go-by-clock-work household at Greta Hall.

But the ties that bound the Greta houses in closest alliance were neither politics, nor chemistry, nor cats—they were the young children. The Greta Hall children and the Windybrowites were inseparable; and what a remarkable company they were. Edith Southey, with her lithe figure, her round rosy face, and her fair hair; Isabel, the fiery; Kate, the dark-eyed and garrulous; Bertha, the brave and the bluff; Sara Coleridge, with her delicate pale beauty and her marvellous eyes; and Dora Wordsworth, from over the Raise—for she often came for a visit—Dora with her swift impetuous movements, her flashing eye and her heavy yellow locks; and last, but not least noticeable, the grey-eyed, merry little only daughter of Greta Bank, Mary Calvert.

While the boys were quaint Job or Hartley Coleridge, the thinker; plumpy Derwent, the brother, with his solemn lisp; Herbert Southey, the adorable, too soon to pass away; and then the young Calverts—John, and Raisley, and William.

Of these latter, alas! with his birth in one must have been born the seeds of that same fatal disorder that had carried off his uncle Raisley Calvert. But what a fine nature had been thus born to languish and pass away in the prime of manhood we may gather from Sterling's letter to Charles Barton, dated Funchal, Madeira, March 3rd, 1838, as quoted in Carlyle's life of Sterling: 'I have now come to live with a friend, a Dr. Calvert, in a small house of our own. He is about my age, an Oriel man, and a very superior person.'

'Among the English,' says Carlyle, 'in pursuit of health, or in flight from fatal disease, that winter, was this Dr. Calvert; about Sterling's age, and in a deeper stage of ailment, this not being his first visit to Madeira, he, warmly joining himself to Sterling, as

we have seen, was warmly received by him; companionship in incurable malady, a touching bond of union, was by no means purely or chiefly a companionship in misery in their case. The sunniest, inextinguishable cheerfulness shone, through all manner of clouds, in both. Calvert had been a travelling physician in some family of rank (the Spencers and the Falklands), who had rewarded him with a pension, shielding his own ill-health from one sad evil. Being hopelessly gone in pulmonary disorder, he now moved about among friendly climates and places, seeking what alleviation there might be; often spending his summer in the house of a sister (her of whom we are writing), 'in the environs of London; an insatiable rider on his little brown pony; always, wherever you might meet him, one of the cheeriest of men. He had plenty of speculation too, clear glances of all kinds into religious, social, moral concerns; and pleasantly incited Sterling's outpourings on such subjects. He could report of fashionable persons and manners in a fine human Cumberland manner; loved art, a great collector of drawings; he had endless help and ingenuity' (we know where that came from); 'and was in short every way a very human, loveable, good and nimble man. The laughing blue eyes of him, the clear cheery soul of him, still redolent of the fresh northern breezes and transparent mountain stream.' (Alas! that the Greta should know transparency no more!) 'With this Calvert, Sterling formed a natural intimacy; and they were to each other a great possession, mutually enlivening many a dark day during the next three years.'

In 1840 the sick friends were at Falmouth; Sterling himself tells us from thence of Calvert, his companion down the way to death: 'Calvert is better than he lately was. He shoots little birds, and dissects and stuffs them; while I carry a hammer, and break flints and slates to look for diamonds and rubies inside.'

Dr. Calvert, the blue-eyed breezy man who found such commonalty of soul with Sterling, died, as the tablet in the old church of St. Kentigern's, Crosthwaite, tells us, at Falmouth, in January of 1842. Writing to Hare, Sterling says of him: 'I have lost Calvert; the man with whom, of all others, I have been during late years the most intimate. Simplicity, benevolence, practical good sense, and moral earnestness were his great unfailing characteristics; and no man, I believe, ever possessed them more entirely.'

These words are worth quoting; we find in them evidence of the same serious earnestness and transparent simplicity in this

later death-stricken Calvert which had been part of his uncle Raisley's possession of soul. The old Quaker stock is still in him; with the desire that was at bottom of Raisley's heart when he made it possible for Wordsworth to help his age; the desire which was, as Carlyle tells us, at the root of Sterling's being, to know 'by what means is a noble life still possible for us here.'

What Sterling found to be the characteristic of John Calvert, till 1842, all those who have known John Calvert's sister, Mrs. Stanger, of Fieldside, till 1890, have found to be hers also. If one wanted words to paint the character of that venerable friend whose loss we now deplore, one would surely say that 'simplicity, benevolence, practical good sense, and moral earnestness' were her unfailing characteristics also.

To return to that little happy child community that blessed the Keswick Valley in the first decade of this century.

We must remember that the same year that the guns were heard roaring off the Isle of Man, and Southey and the apothecary and the eighteen sworn men were like to have stood to arms in the Keswick market-place, for fear of the French—if only the poet had not been too sorely busy in his newly plastered library, correcting the proofs of 'Madoc'—there was born, as the April night faded into May, a little daughter into the home of Greta Hall. 'I had a daughter, Edith, hatched last night, for she came into the world with not much more preparation than a chicken, and no more beauty than a young dodo,' wrote Robert Southey to Miss Barker on March 1, 1804. And thus Sara Coleridge, sixteen months the senior, for she was born at Greta Hall, December 22, 1802, had a baby cousin for her playmate. In the following August, the two Keswick infants were to be blessed with a tiny friend, from over the Raise, by the birth of Dora Wordsworth, which took place on August 16th.

On the 11th of October of the same year, at Greta Bank or Windybrow, the baby cousins, Edith Southey and Sara Coleridge, and the tiny Dora, had given to them another companion and friend for life by the birth of Mary Calvert.

If we wish to know more about this little lady we must go to Sara Coleridge's journal, and there we shall read how 'the last event' of Sara's earlier childhood 'which abided with her' was a visit to the seaside at Allonby, when she was nine years old, with Mrs. Calvert and the Windybrow bairns.

‘Of the party beside John and Raisley Calvert, and Mary, their sister, were Tom and William Maude, the sons of Mrs. Calvert’s sister. We used to gallop up and down the wide sands on two little ponies. Mary and I sometimes quarrelled with the boys. I remember Raisley and the rest bursting angrily into our bed-room and flinging a pebble at Mary, enraged at our having dared to put crumbs into their porridge; not content with which inroad and onslaught, they put mustard into ours next morning, the sun having gone down upon their boyish wrath without quenching it. One of them said it was all that little vixen, Sara Coleridge; Mary was quiet enough by herself.’

‘In those early days we used to spend much of our summer time in trees, greatly to the horror of some of our summer visitors’—and here the autobiography of Sara Coleridge’s childhood abruptly ceases.

Yet until February of this present year the story from living lips of that childhood ceased not.

The little climber of the trees at Greta Hall had here on earth a living testimony in the person of one who was as fond of arboreal gymnastics as she was, as fearless as herself, or, to use Mrs. Stanger’s own words, ‘as great a tom-boy as any of them.’

It was my privilege to see her often latterly—this little playmate of Sara Coleridge and Edith Southey and Dora Wordsworth—and to talk much of those old times, and to feel as one talked her love of the days of old and loyalty to the Southey and Coleridge family grow into one’s very being. On this matter I almost received her heart into my own.

There she sat in her easy chair, the grey eyes of her laughing with all the fun of those days of romp and frolic at Greta Hall, or filled with tears at the thoughts, almost too deep for tears, that a memory from out of the storehouse of the past would bring. What a storehouse truly it was! Not only could Mrs. Joshua Stanger keep in mind from day to day the thousand interests of the time, the large questions of the nation, or the little questions of her native place—she not only knew, as we say in Cumberland, ‘aw that was stirrin’;’ the last great speech in the House of Commons, the last book of worth published—but in her mind she had never let any of the long years go to sleep. She spoke of events in the fifties, as in the tens and twenties, and one felt that a truly human heart had beaten beneath the lifelong drama that had been hers from beginning to end.

'The first thing I can distinctly remember,' she used to say, was my christening in the old Church. For some reason unknown to me—perhaps because of the Quaker blood in the family—I was not christened till I was three years old, and brother Raisley and I were taken to Crosthwaite Church together. I distinctly remember thinking a great deal of the blue frock I wore on that occasion.' This was, as the Baptismal Register testifies, on the last day of 1806. That this baptism was considered a memorable event in the eyes of the person who made the entry is clear from the fact that he gives a whole page of parchment to it. It gives us the name of the father and the maiden name of the mother of the two children thus baptised, tells us the dates of birth of Raisley and Mary, and is interesting as showing that at this early time the old name of their house, 'Windybrow,' had given way to the more modern name of 'Greta Bank.'

The next thing she remembered clearly was Shelley's visit to Keswick. I once repeated the question—

Ah, did you once see Shelley plain?

And did he speak to you?

And did you speak to him again?

How strange it seems and new!

'Yes, to be sure, dear sir, I did see Shelley plain, and I remember his eyes and his hair, and how troubled he was because, when he came to unfold the packet, the workbox he had brought for Mr. Calvert's little girl, as he used to call me, was not to be found. But I think I remember best the sort of look that came upon my father's and upon Southey's face when he talked, and how I and my brothers were hurried out of the room, lest we should hear the conversation.'

The next memorable day was the occasion of Southey's return home in November of 1813 as Poet Laureate. 'I remember the excitement we were all in at the Hall, waiting for his return, and next day we had a great tea-party and made a wreath of ever-green, and Edith Southey and I put it upon his head and crowned him.'

As late as last Easter Day, 1889, the faithful hands that helped to weave the Laureate's crown sent down a laurel-wreath to lay upon his tomb.

'Dear sir,' she would say, 'from the days when it was part of my evening task to read aloud Wordsworth's poems to my father, I honoured him; but I think I never quite got over my childish

fear of Wordsworth. I loved Southey; there never breathed a gentler, kinder-hearted man!’

It was, I suspect, the want of twinkle and fun in Wordsworth that lay like a weight upon that merriest of young girls. For Mrs. Stanger was full of fun, radiant and sparkling with wit to the last. If in her younger days her swift repartee had made her sometimes seem brusque, in her mellow old age the swift, keen sense of the ridiculous served her in good stead, and gave a piquancy and a freshness to her words that made one feel as though in the presence of perpetual youth.

Just behind her, where she sat in her ruby-coloured chair, hung the portrait of brother John, Sterling’s friend—his large clear eyes, his delicate mouth, the seriousness of his open face, showing above the ample stock of neckcloth that he wore; on her left, a more notable pencil drawing of Wordsworth by Nash.¹ She would point at it and say, ‘I think that is the best portrait of Wordsworth I have seen.’ The poet is seated, leaning his solemn, rather heavy and large-featured face upon his right hand; his left hand is, like Napoleon’s, in his waistcoat.

‘That was his favourite attitude when he was reciting his poems; and, because he would always then place his hand into his flannel vest, the flannel vest tapes would give way, and as a little girl, scarce able to reach so high, it was my duty to replace those tapes when he stayed at Windybrow. I remember now the kind of terror with which my poor little trembling fingers stitched away after breakfast to repair the disaster wrought by that trick of the poet’s hand.

It was doubtless a relic of that alarm of the old vest-tape sewing days that had kept so clear in her mind the impressions of the difference in matters of dress between the two poets. ‘Wordsworth,’ she used to say, ‘would fling his cloak and things round him as if he didn’t care whether they fitted him or not, and hardly ever seemed to give a thought to his dress; but Southey was prim and spruce and neat from head to toe—cravat spotless, and coat, however old, neatly fitting and carefully brushed: a man of order every inch of him.’

Once she most amusingly, but quite good-naturedly, spoke of the different way in which the Greta Hall and Rydal Mount breakfast was got through. Here the poet talked and was waited on hand and foot as a matter of course. The toast was spread,

¹ Nash died January 1821. Wordsworth was born 1770. The portrait is of a man nearer fifty than forty years old.

the cream was poured into the tea, the notebook was near, and the women, with love and devotion unparalleled, hovered as it were in continual attendance—of their own wants oblivious. There no one seemed to think about the Bard; he seemed to think about all—the aunt, the children, the very tabbies. Was the milk as they liked it, was the porridge right? And then Mrs. Southey, she had no appetite, she must be coaxed—and such coaxing, it was as pretty as a play—such happy, lover-like ways. This little piece of bread thus toasted, that cup of tea so sugared. But Southey? Oh let them send him a cup of tea up to the great study presently—never mind for him, so that the mother and the aunts and the bairns were breakfasted.

Enthusiastically would Mrs. Stanger speak of Dorothy and Mrs. Wordsworth, and always with deepest reverence of Wordsworth's poems; but the awe of the vest-tape days was heavy upon her. I suspect as a child she would no more have jumped upon Wordsworth's knees than on the King's. But on the genial knees of Southey of course she had clambered. Southey's knees were the common property of all the children of Greta Bank or Greta Hall; and what a length of knee it was!

'Dear sir,' Mrs. Stanger would say with a smile, 'I remember as a little girl thinking that Southey when he rose from the table was never going to finish getting up.'

Those dark eyes and the heavy curls of hair upon the Poet's brow she too remembered, and spoke of the high voice of the man, and of the quaint way in which, when he was going to read a poem or when he addressed a friend that he met, he would look up, as a short-sighted man looks up beneath his eye-glasses; not that Southey's eyes were ever dim—it was just a trick, and as Mrs. Stanger spoke of it I recalled that I had noticed it in his son Cuthbert.

The joyous days of the bluebell gathering by the Greta; of the primrosing at Armathwaite and Mirehouse; of the 'daffy' getting on Lord's Isle; and the picnics in Lord William Gordon's woods—of these too would she speak. Southey was always the leader of the picnic band. One of the happiest times on which I remember seeing her, if one might judge by her face, was just such a picnic and water-party as she had enjoyed when a child, on the bank of Derwentwater five years ago, when the little Mary Calvert, now an aged lady of eighty summers, in the sunny quiet of a summer day, was the presiding genius of a band of picnickers, and

from beneath the ample brim of a satin poke-bonnet poked her fun at us who made such bungling work at the fire for the gipsy kettle. It was, I believe, on this occasion that a watcher approached to warn the party from landing; but, hearing who was the queen of the party, he said: 'Ow, if t'auld laädy is Mistress Stanger o' Fieldside she mud gang whariver she need,' and so saying strode off.

Once she told me of the school-days at Bellevue, Ambleside, where she met a former scholar of the school in the person of the daughter of Wordsworth's Whitehaven cousin Richard, Dorothy Wordsworth, who was domiciled at Rydal Mount about 1813, and who with Dora came daily to the classes. Mary Calvert, being of Dora Wordsworth's own age, was naturally attracted to 'bright-minded Dora,' of whom she ever spoke with love; but the fresh beauty of that elder Dorothy struck her girlish fancy, and only last year she asked me for news of beautiful Mrs. Harrison, of Green Bank, then in her eighty-seventh year.

It was at this school-day time that she saw much on half-holidays of Rydal Mount ways and manners, and saw only to revere.

The dancing days of the olden time were fresh in her mind. As Sara Coleridge remembered the minuet with Charlie Denton, the Vicar's little lad—which Master Youdale, the fiddler and dancing-master, put them through—so did Mrs. Joshua Stanger remember the Keswick dancing-school. The annual dancing display that ended the winter's session of Master Youdale's teaching was a great event. The quiet serenity of Mrs. Southey upon this occasion, contrasted with the fidget of Mrs. Coleridge, as to the white frocks and sashes for the young folk, had struck Mrs. Stanger.

In those days, and still in some parts of Cumberland, dancing was a serious part of the education of the youth. The fiddler came round, and school, except for his class, ceased. There are still living in Keswick men and women past the shady side of sixty who, if they hear the old-fashioned 'Jack my laddie' played, put their hands upon their hips and fall to the three-cornered reel with all the spirit and 'lishness' of young things. The Greta Hall and Greta Bank children were to be properly educated, and this meant among other things that they should learn to dance.

Mrs. Stanger would speak of the grace of Edith Southey as she moved through the minuet.

'You know, dear sir, Sara Coleridge had the intellect in her face. You can get from the portrait Laurence painted for me no

idea of the pathos and the feeling in it, nor the azure-grey depth of those wonderful meditative eyes of Sara's—eyes into which it was said her father had looked and left behind the colour of his own. But for figure and grace and perfect movement Edith Southey bore away the palm; I can only describe her movements as swan-like.'

I was glad to hear from living lips the truth of that description of Edith, which caused such quizzing when, in 1824, Amelia Opie wrote in Mrs. Waters' album some washy lines commemorative of her seeing Southey and the graceful Edith:

'Twas pleasant to meet
And see thee, fam'd Swan of the Derwent's fair tide,
With the elegant Cygnet that floats by thy side.

and when Southey, much tickled by the description, began a letter to his daughter thus:

'My elegant Cygnet,—By this time your elegance will be looking for some news of the Swan and the Swan's nest,' &c.

Those dancing classes, though they could not turn geese into swans, at any rate taught grace and easy motion and manners to Master Youdale's pupils.

There was a delightful levelling-up about those parties. The children of poor and rich alike, if only they had learned the minuet step and were provided with the necessary gloves and pumps, met on terms of absolute equality when on the last great day, and in the eyes of their parents, they were put through their paces. 'And you know, dear sir,' said Mrs. Stanger, 'it rather took the pride out of us to find that our clogger's boy and our schoolmaster's little girl knew their steps and made their bows and curtsies better than we did.'

But dancing days were to come to an end at last, and first of the Keswick coterie to fly away was little Mary Calvert.

In the Parish Register of Crosthwaite Church, under date 3rd of August, 1824, appears the entry:

'Joshua Stanger, bachelor, of the parish of Crosthwaite, and Mary Calvert, spinster, of the same parish, married in the Church by license, with consent of parents.'

The hand that tied the knot was the hand of Mrs. Lynn Linton's father, the stately Vicar, James Lynn. The witnesses to the wedding were Sterling's friend, John M. Calvert, Sara Coleridge, and Sara Maude.

It was a remarkable wedding, if only for the fact that Southey

spoke at the wedding breakfast, and two of the famous triad whom Wordsworth has immortalised were bridesmaids. Mere chance was it that the full triad were not present. Edith Southey was away on a visit in the south of England. Writing to a widowed friend on the sixty-first anniversary of that wedding-day, Mrs. Stanger says: 'I can enter into your recollections of the past, the happy days of union with the beloved one. So it has been with me. Last Monday, August 3rd, was the sixty-first anniversary of the wedding-day. I need not enlarge on this matter. The bridesmaids were Dora Wordsworth, Sara Coleridge, my cousin, Sara Maude Miss Moorsome's aunt, and Isabella Curwen, Dora W.'s aunt. A very pretty group, though not costumed as is the fashion nowadays.'

Speaking of that day, more than two generations ago, Mrs. Stanger told me that Dora Wordsworth journeyed back to Rydal in their coach, and was all the way miserable, as fearing she was *de trop*. 'But you know, dear sir,' she said with a twinkle, 'newly married people are so stupid that I always should recommend a third person to ride bodkin—and we were quite sorry to part with her, as we did at the bottom of Rydal Hill, where her father was waiting to receive her and to wish us joy.'

Happy union was that with the worthy Doughty Street merchant. Sorrowful in this, with a lifelong sorrow, that a fair child was given them, another little Mary—given but taken away from them in 1829, to leave a scar upon their hearts till death.

What Herbert's death was to Southey, the death of that little girl, whose bust used to stand in the Fieldside study, was to Mrs. Stanger. She never spoke of any children without a sigh. If, as she walked round the room to point out the portraits upon the walls to strangers, her attention was called to the medallion of that bust, she would say, 'That is a closed chapter;' and so late as last year I saw her eyes fill with silent but eloquent tears as she passed the little picture of the child.

The child's death left a tenderness for every living thing upon her heart. We have only to turn to Sara Coleridge's memoirs and letters to see how, inasmuch as she felt the loss of dear ones deeply herself, she was able in her real sympathy to speak comfort to those that mourned. 'Your last kind note was written in a strain that harmonised well with my feelings,' says Sara Coleridge in answer to Mrs. Stanger's letter of condolence on the death of Sara's infant daughter.

'Faith in a world beyond this vale of tears,' linked with the sure and certain hope of reunion with the beloved, was Mrs. Stanger's; and throughout the correspondence alluded to above one notices that it was not on intellectual problems that Sara Coleridge wrote to Mrs. Stanger, so much as on the realities of deep feeling, the problems of the heart; and that it was specially in the cloudy days of grief that she turned to Mrs. Stanger, the sunny Mary Calvert of her youth, who remained the sunny Mary Calvert to the end, for sympathy and help.

Ah! how much at such a time brave hands had to do and brave hearts to bear she had learnt when death came suddenly upon him whom she loved, and with her warm hand within his cold one she found strength to drive a weary eighteen miles, across the lonely moor, beneath dark Blencathra and by the wailing Greta's stream, back to the home upon the hill in which for thirty-six years she should wait and watch alone.

It was a fair spot, that Fieldside of her husband's making—their happy choice when feeling the irresistible charm of their native valley they returned from Wandsworth, after nineteen years' absence, to dwell amongst their own people, because they loved the Greta Bank and Dovecot and Greta Hall. The light has gone out of it, its windows are darkened, but it is a fair spot still, with its daffodils ablaze on the slopes, its sycamore between it and the saffron sky. Fair from thence is the dawn when the far-off vale from Bassenthwaite to Derwentwater is swathed in mist; fair there is the noon when the little town in the hollow lies silently beneath the opal, gauzy veil of its hearthstone smoke; fair is Fieldside at the sunset, when over Newlands Hawse the sun that burns 'upon the waters to the west' sends showers of silver down the hills, and with reflected glories lights the Lake; and fairest when, between the sunset and the stars, the lamplight stars come out in the Keswick streets, and the jewels of the far-off railway lamps flicker into being against the azure-blue background of Grisedale and Barf. It is a house of ancient hospitalities and old-fashioned country ways. I never climbed the hill and passed beneath the sturdy portal, with its date 1843 upon it—sacred for that in that year Southey died—without being sure that many spirit guests would be summoned by the venerable old lady from out the past, and there would be much talk of the present.

'Have you seen my new experiments in ensilage? Thomas

(he was the *fidus Achates* of her farm) says the cows never took to food so well in their lives, and though I confess to believing it has left a taste in the cream, it certainly has thickened it; do go and see it. My legs won't let me go to-day; I saw the process yesterday.' That was a little startling query, perhaps, from an old lady of eighty summers. But as an old lady of eighty-three she rose early on the morning of the Show day to review her fat-stock ere it went to the Show; and none more proudly spoke of the blue ribbons and cards of honour that her cattle won than she.

No talk came amiss to her if it was not mere chatter. 'Dear sir, you have been to London; well, what pictures am I to look at? For I intend to stay a day on my way through to Lyme Regis. And did you see the play? How did Irving acquit himself in the "Merchant of Venice"? I hear such different reports.' And her eyes would sparkle as one vainly endeavoured to set forth what one had seen.

To London? Did she go to London? Ay, verily, to London; and through London to Lyme on the Dorset coast every summer would she travel, and that too with a bright heart and a merry.

A loyalist was she. 'God bless the Queen! I knew another reign, you know, and I feel we English people owe a deep debt of gratitude to her for the example she has set to wives and mothers,' she once said. What she said she meant. On that proud day in 1887 when Her Majesty Victoria, by the grace of God still Queen, passed in triumphal show to Westminster, there was no loyaller-hearted woman as witness of the Jubilee than the little Mary Calvert of old time—the aged lady who in her enthusiasm refused to sit, but would stand up straight upon the box-seat of the coach, near Apsley House, to see Her Majesty pass.

She was in her eighty-third year when she sat with the old people of more than sixty winters who partake of a common meal each Christmas-tide in the little Keswick town.

I do not think that Mrs. Stanger ever was seen to better advantage than when she mixed with the simple folk. The deference, almost to veneration, paid her by her tenantry, as by her humbler neighbours—the devotion shown to her by her servants—never made her for a moment forget that they had all a common human heart.

She had the power of being on familiar terms with them, and setting them perfectly at their ease; and yet always she was the Squireess, the lady to be treated with natural respect, the

mistress whose will was law. 'Niver could be a better mistress in t'whole warld, 'niver a kinder friend,' was the saying of one who had attended upon her for twenty years. 'Not an ounce of pride about her,' was another saying of an old retainer. And they who remember how she would drive over to see her tenants at Wallthwaite, and partake of the simple hospitalities in the far-off Fellside farm, knew this was literally true.

Yet it was as landowner that she most shone. She had inherited an instinctive love for the management of land. She knew the ins and outs of legal and law-agency lore, in connection with the occupation of land; but the interest her estate had for her was the human interest of the folk who lived upon it. I have never come across anyone who more truly entered into the feeling of a landowner's duty to the tenantry. She often spoke of it. 'Land has its privileges, but it has its burdens; it has its rights, but it has its duties, dear sir, also.' And her care to enter into and help the friendly life of her own tenants showed she meant what she said. The question of 'rights of way' once came up, and after a little conversation she laid down her spectacles and said in a decided tone:

'Parliament, dear sir, ought not to leave it to private individuals to defend public rights of way; they are matters of too great importance, especially in such a land as ours.' But the fair-minded old lady would always add: 'Nevertheless, the public should respect the land they pass over. There is a great deal of needless damage done by thoughtless people, and I dare say landowners receive much provocation.' How pleased would the Lady of Fieldside have been to have heard that Mr. Buchanan's resolution for making the County Council responsible maintainers of rights of way had obtained a majority, and that members of all parties had voted for it!

It is not often that we hear of a lady of eighty-three writing a letter of congratulation to a friend who has attempted to keep open a public path, but before me lies just such a letter, in which she characterises the attempt to keep open old paths as 'a noble effort.' To my way of thinking, the noble effort is a letter so written with such spirit from one so just, so true, and such a lover of the land of her birth.

There had been a most unfortunate attempt to close Latrigg-top against the people; the hands that would have closed it were the hands of her old friends. I do not think any act of later days

so troubled her. It was her father's Latrigg. She remembered eating the baked potatoes made by the turf bonfires they lit when they made the road to the top in 1814. She remembered her father saying that the people were free to use the path for ever, and that he would get a road leading to it declared a right of way by the justices. Every Sunday all through the years had she gazed across the gorge between her and that mountain height, and seen with joy the people clear against the sky—and to think that this never more could be! The people who had claimed the right of way were pushed into a court of law; there was absolute refusal to settle it out of court. The evidence of the little girl of Windybrow was important, as showing implied dedication, and sorely as it troubled her to go against her personal friends, she gave evidence. I spoke afterwards with one of the Commissioners who examined her on oath previous to the trial, and he said, 'A marvellous old lady! she absolutely refused to be puzzled in cross-examination. Her evidence,' he added, 'is invaluable.' And what he said proved to be so when read in court.

The visitors to, and residents in Keswick, who rejoice their hearts with the marvellous view from the top of Latrigg, if they let their eyes wander back along the ridge across the valley from near the Druid's Circle to the town, may gaze a moment upon Fieldside among its trees and flowers, and thank a brave old lady for her public spirit shown in years beyond the fourscore that are ours.

But her vitality was as great as her memory was good. Never a lecture of importance in the little town below the hill but she would attend; she sat through a three hours' recital of the 'Messiah,' given in the evening in the Mother Church, only last Eastertide. Last May she watched the May-show procession, and drove into the Fitz Park to laugh at the fun and enjoy the sight of the little girls in their white frocks dancing the old-fashioned Maypole dance and skipping for the prizes that the May Queen gave.

And this vitality enabled her to be the best of hostesses to the last. She would each year preside at a bountiful supper-party given at her house to the choir of her parish church. And the old-fashioned cheer was not one whit less memorable than the old-fashioned cordiality with which she welcomed her guests of all degrees.

Once a week she held an 'At-home' in simple wise; and

touching enough was it to see how those who felt years heavy upon them would make the Saturday walk up the great hill, to chat with the venerable lady of Fieldside, almost a religious exercise. I fancy they all came away feeling that old age was a better thing and a brighter thing than they had thought it on the way up, and that a heart need never grow old.

The friends of old Greta Hall days had passed away one by one, but Mrs. Stanger had such power of swift sympathy with the young and the new, that hers was no friendless old age; nor did she ever seem to forget the thousand 'little unremembered acts of constant kindness' which her own kindness called forth. I remember that, having attended the funeral of her friend, the last of the Southes of Greta Hall days, I had written her some simple account of the dead man as I saw him peacefully sleeping there in his coffin; of the bearing of the body by the stalwart yeomen to the little church below Askham Vicarage; of the burial service beside the rushing Lowther stream. And this was the note, dated December 28, 1888: 'Many kind acts are *registered in my memory* that Mr. — has done, but none that has gone so *straight* to my heart as his last act of reverence towards my old friend, Cuthbert Southey. I am deeply interested in what I hear.' What a full register of kind deeds, thought I, must that old heart verily be that can thus feel and think! But they who watched the tender, almost solemn care with which she would label and paste into permanent albums the Christmas and birthday cards that came with greetings, year in year out, knew the heart was as mindful as it was warm in its recollections of the tiny proofs of love and reverence those Christmas cards or birthday greetings intended.

She helped also with wisest generosity others than those of the poorest of the poor—her friends whose circumstances had been less fortunate than her own. The very soul of unostentatious charity, none knew through what ever-widening circles her benevolence moved. But the poor in the Crosthwaite Vale felt that 'theer nivver wad be another Mrs. Joshua, nivver could be,' and they honoured her, one and all. She was, as Derwent Coleridge, in a little poem dedicated to her and printed for private circulation in 1879, put it:

In humblest homes a helpful visitor;
Homes too a little humbler than thine own,
Where pleasant words and looks are needed most,
Oft seconded by kindly courteous acts—
Far rarer proof of Christian charity.

• Her home had been for the past half-century the rendezvous of lovers of the English Lake poets. How many a time did she graciously delight the stranger whom a friend would bring, at a request to call upon her—have her autograph album brought and show the famous letters therein from great men. Not the least famous those from young Raisley and from Wordsworth to William Calvert. And with what a solemn way would she repeat the ‘Raisley Sonnet’ and its close: ‘It gladdens me, O worthy short-lived youth! to think how much of this will be thy praise!’ as she laid the letter back into its resting-place.

She always poohpoohed the idea that Wordsworth was describing her father in the latter verse of the ‘Castle of Indolence.’ ‘My father’s eyes certainly were fine, but nothing compared to Coleridge’s,’ she would say; ‘and then his lip was not down-hung.’ The little pencil sketch of her father certainly bore out her contention; and she would agree to the suggestion that Wordsworth was really conjuring up a face from the recollections of the two friends, her father and Coleridge, and adding a touch from a memory of his own to the picture.

Never so did Mrs. Stanger seem to glow as when a real Coleridge and a real Wordsworth were beneath her kindly roof-tree.

It was at her house I saw for the first and last time Derwent Coleridge, and heard him speak of what Mrs. Stanger had been to him from early Greta Hall days.

In the touching poem by Derwent Coleridge before referred to, entitled ‘The Vale of Crosthwaite,’ he describes Fieldside and the view of mountain and vale and lake from the high lawn from where

we look

Down the steep cleft through which the Greta flows,
 Across to Brundholme’s over-hanging wood.
 How shall I paint the scene on which I gaze,
 Year after year thy favoured guest, so fondly
 Seated, or pacing the trim terrace walk
 That fronts the high-placed cottage, shall I call it,
 Decked as it is with all that graces life?’

Fieldside needs no picturing. Other houses as fair may be built among its trees and flower-beds; but the lady, the genius of Fieldside—

in whose dear hands were gathered
 The various strings of grateful memory,
 To pluck them at our bidding one by one—

she whom Derwent Coleridge speaks of thus :

Friend of my childhood ! whom to see and hear
Is to renew the springtide of my youth.

Friend and companion ! trained for serious speech
By early converse with the good and wise,
Earnest for truth, with heart and eye attuned
To Nature's
Ever intent on charitable deeds—

has gone from Fieldside for ever.

Mrs. Stanger's natural force seemed unabated—her eye, that grey, merry Calvert eye, was undimmed—but she felt at times the sorrow of old age. Her very swiftness of thought must have often made her wish, as she quaintly put it, 'to have another pair of legs.' This same vigour of mind she prayed would be continued to the last. Of death she had no fear, only of life prolonged beyond clearness of brain and mind. Writing to a friend in February 1887, upon the death of Mrs. Coleridge, she says :

'Yes, the death of dear Mrs. Coleridge has made its mark upon my heart and memory. To me it must be a more impressive event than for those of the same age and standing. She was my friend. The affectionate intercourse that I had with the dear couple, both so interesting, was a passage in my life ever to be remembered. I am very aged myself ; I pray that the mind, feeble though it is, may by God's mercy hold out as long as the case—the body does.

'Ever your affectionate friend,

'MARY S.

'Pray keep indoors ; your cold must not be neglected.'

God preserved that mind to the last. Within eight weeks of her death we had a talk about hymnology. Her nephew, Mr. M——, had just compiled a very interesting collection of the originals of the 'Hymns Ancient and Modern,' and she urged the good and glory of true hymn-writing as helps to souls in doubt and sorrow, and spoke of her own favourites. But God's finger in the same great mercy and in the fulness of time touched her, and she slept. Through the quiet sunshine of a February day (February 10)—rare in its brightness and its beauty, clear though cold—they bore her body down the hill to the Church of good St. Kentigern in the valley. The people came to their doors and stood and gazed after the sad procession ; the tradesmen darkened their windows and followed

out of the town. They passed the old Hall garden on the hill by the Greta, where she had played with the Coleridges and Southneys in her youth, and so over the river by whose banks she had gathered bluebells for the birthday wreath in the days of auld lang syne. And the Greta sang and sparkled at the bridge, and Skiddaw sloped down towards the vale in happy smiling pomp of February gold. But the dark procession sadly went on its way.

They entered the Church of the Cross in the Thwaite itself, in its solid repair, a monument of the generous care and piety of her husband's brother. The organ moaned forth majestic music; slowly they bore the coffin heaped with flowers past the font, whereby she had stood a startled child to feel the chrismal rain in the long years gone. Solemnly they laid it down before the altar rails where she had knelt a happy bride; and some heads turned to the double tablet of white marble upon the southern wall, and sighed to think that the last of the Calverts had come to her long rest. The lesson was read, the organ wailed again; out to the clear cold sunshine they went, past the plot of ground where the Southneys sleep, and laid her near, in a grave where the roses bloom the last in summer and forget-me-nots will never surely die, by the side of the husband she had so loved and honoured until death.

Then the bells broke the silence that fell upon the dark crowd round the grave, and to the sound of a muffled peal the mourners, not a little comforted, came back from the quiet churchyard to the little town beneath the hills, and as they passed the bridge they felt that the roll of Greta Hall and Greta Bank memories had been folded up, and that a friend, both of rich and poor, high and low, had gone from among them; a friend who had left behind in the Keswick Vale a name of honour, of simplicity, of wit and wisdom, of love and goodwill to all, of moral earnestness and sincerity, of sympathy and faith—that would outlive the grave and keep the name of the last of the Calverts fragrant and ever green.

THE MATCH OF THE SEASON.

It was beastly weather. It had been raining, pretty well without cessation, for, I should say, quite three weeks on end. It was raining then; coming down in regular bucketsful. And the ground! You should have seen the ground! Put one foot down, and lean all your weight on it for sixty seconds, and you wanted two strong men to pull you out again. But, you know, I don't call that a bad state of the ground for football—not for Rugby Union. Nobody minds a little mud; some men like it. Heavy forwards, for instance. The year the Pantaloons carried all before them—only lost one match—they owed it all to the mud. That was before the passing game came in. They had a lot of heavy men in front, regular weight-carriers. When they formed the scrummages—and they managed that there should be nothing else but scrummages—and they had their feet well planted in the mud, you couldn't move them. Upon my word, you couldn't. You might as well have run your head against the Monument. Even at the worst, mud *is* soft falling. When there's a frost, and you come down—you do come down. You're in luck if you don't get up in pieces.

I didn't play this year; it was a disappointment, I can tell you. Early in the season I had a bad eye. Poulter gave it me—in the Engineer match. The ball was near their goal. I stooped to pick it up. Somehow I tripped. Of course, Poulter didn't know what I was going to be up to. He kicked at the ball, and instead of the ball he kicked my eye. I was a sight! And then, hardly was I able to show again when, in the match with the St. Galen's men, Thistlethwaite, a great giant, over six feet high, picked me up when I was running, and pitched me on my head against one of the iron posts on which we hang the rope to enclose the ground. Of course he didn't mean it, but I thought that game had seen the last of me. It was all I could do, a month afterwards, to toddle down to the ground to see the match with Biddleham. Play, worse luck, was out of the question. My brother didn't play either. Miss Blake objected. She used to be awfully fond of the game before she became engaged to him, but since that event she seems to have

cooled off a bit. She says that when a man is going to be married she thinks he ought to stop that kind of thing. There's something in it. Jack Hill, two days before his marriage, got compound fracture in both his legs. It was to be his last match—and it was. But the wedding was postponed.

I don't suppose there were more than five hundred people there, all told. The weather kept them away. I've seen over ten thousand on a sunny afternoon. But it isn't everybody who cares to stand for a couple of hours in a shower-bath, out in the open, in the middle of January. They missed something, though, those who didn't go. I never saw a better game of the kind. There wasn't any science; when it was as much as a man could do to keep on his feet, there couldn't be. And as for passing! When the ball is as heavy as lead, and so greasy that you can't keep hold of it, you try what passing comes to then. But there was pluck. Talk about 'mimic warfare'—there was precious little 'mimic' about the 'warfare' there.

The Biddleham men kicked off. Ricketts, their captain, sent a long rocketter flying into touch well inside our twenty-five. The ball was dry, and it was about as good a kick as there was that afternoon. But Gilkes, our right three-quarters, was on the ball. He ran it down about a dozen yards, then punted it well back again. One of their three-quarters had it, but muffed it rather, and was downed. His was the first baptism of mud. Burrowes got behind him, dropped him on to his face, and just fell down on the top of him. You might have made a plaster cast of his figure in the place on which he fell. I could see from the expression of his face—that is, from what there was of it to be seen—that he didn't like it. He seemed to think that Burrowes needn't have fallen all his length on top of him. That was balderdash. But there are some men like that, you know. I remember myself once, when I was playing against the Finches—the Fulham Finches; the club is extinct now; they say, as a joke, that the members all got killed—I knocked a man's two front teeth right down his throat. He turned quite nasty. However, I did hear afterwards that he also belonged to the engaged brigade; and, no doubt, a man doesn't like to go toothless to meet his bride. Still, he ought to keep his temper, especially in the middle of a game.

Nowadays loose play is all the rage. I remember when they used to pack a scrummage, and keep it packed. Now the game

is, directly a scrummage is formed, to break it up again. But that style of play don't pay always. Directly Burrowes had downed their man, a scrummage was formed.

'Play loosely! Play loosely!' cried Staines, our captain.

They did play loosely. The consequence was that they all fell flat, face foremost, in the mud. Before they were up, Staines was off with the ball. He passed the halves; the forwards were still making inquiries into the constitution of top soils. Then that man whom Burrowes had downed got hold of him. He must have been a vicious sort of chap. He ran at Staines just like a bull, sent him flying backwards, and fell bang on top of him. I thought the ball had burst, not to mention Staines. When the scrummage formed again he didn't say much about loose play. He seemed to want his breath to cool his porridge.

'Go it, Biddleham!' cried a man who stood by me. 'You've got them now. Loose! Loose! Let them have another taste of their noses; then you'll be able to carry the ball right through.'

That is the way in which some people talk at football matches. If I hadn't taken it for granted that he had paid his money at the gate, I should have asked him to leave the ground. But I could see at a glance that in the scrummages the Biddleham forwards were more effective than ours on ground like that. They were a heavy lot of men, and very fond of falling; and every time they fell they took care that our men were underneath to fall upon. It might not have been intentional, but it did look odd, for no man likes to be *always* fallen on, especially by a lot of fellows each of whom would turn the scale at a good twelve stone. I suppose they must have fallen on our fellows quite half-a-dozen times before the ball was brought into play again. Then they took it through with a rush, leaving our chaps staggering about as though they were stuck in the mud. Over went our halves like ninepins, and I thought they were going to take it right behind. But they let it get a little bit too far in front of them, and Gilkes had hold of it, and was off like a flash. He is a flyer—Gilkes. He ran through their forwards, and cannoned into Ricketts, letting him have the ball in the face—which, I should say by the look of it—the ball, I mean, not the face—was already beginning to weigh about a ton. Down sat Ricketts to think it over. But, before he began to think it over, he stretched out his arm and caught hold of Gilkes by the leg. And

down went Gilkes. Possibly the ball was too greasy for anyone to get firm hold of it. Anyhow, when Gilkes went down, the ball went off in front of him. Crookshanks, their left three-quarters, got hold of it, and tried to pass to Knight, their centre. But by this time a lot of our men were up, and they sat down on Knight in a heap. This was hard on the beggar, for he had muffed the ball, and it had gone behind him. Their back had picked it up; and, while our men were still sitting upon Knight, he punted it into touch.

From the throw-out another scrummage was formed.

'Pack the scrummage!' I cried. 'Don't let them rush it through.'

But it was plain that in six inches of mud the Biddleham men were better than us at scrummages. Our men went in gamely, and they pushed. There is a lot of art in scrummaging. Watch an old hand, and see how he sticks to the ball, never letting it get six inches from his feet. I've seen a man screw through a scrummage single-handed. But to show that kind of skill there are two things needed. You want ground on which you can get some kind of a footing, and you don't want *all* the weight to be upon the other side. Those Biddleham men played a game of their own, and it was not a game which I should call good form. They gave way, judiciously, at unexpected moments, and our men fell down, and then, if the ball was underneath, they fell on top of them. You hadn't time to sing out 'Man down!' before they were burying the Biddleham fellows in the mud. It was all very well to say it was accident, but after the first dozen accidents of that sort our men got wild. They lost their heads. They went in anyhow, having had about as much mud down their throats as they cared to swallow. And so the Biddleham men, who by that time had hustled the leather right down the field, rushed the ball clean through. Staines fell on it, or tried to; but, somehow, he just managed to miss it, and all he got was the mud. What made it worse was that one of their forwards, thinking that he hadn't got the mud, but the leather, plumped on top of him. I could see that Staines didn't like it at all. But it was no good saying anything, for Parker, our left three-quarters, had got the ball and tried to pass, and had passed to one of their men instead of to one of ours. And off went the Biddleham man like a bull of Bashan. You should have heard them screech! Before the ball was held he was within twelve yards of the goal line.

'Go it, Biddleham!' cried the man who had stood by me, and who had made himself obnoxious before. 'One good shove, all together, and you're in.'

And they were in, all in a heap, and the ball at the bottom. They didn't wait for our men to come up, so that the scrummage might be properly formed, but rushed it in like blazes. And the touch was scored. Didn't they bellow! But one thing was certain, our men couldn't score a goal; they had touched-down close to the boundary. The man who could kick a goal at that distance against the wind, in a pouring rain, with the ground like a bog, and the ball as heavy as lead, has yet to be born. However, Ricketts had a try at it; but he got as near to the goal as he got to the moon.

'Play up, Biddleham!' I cried.

'They'll have to do a lot of playing first,' said the man, who was still sticking himself beside me.

Of course I said nothing. A man who could make to a perfect stranger gratuitous remarks like that is a sort of man I never could get fond of.

Staines was on the ball before it had even got behind. He tried a drop. He might as well have tried to drop his head. The thing was waterlogged. From where I stood I could hear it squash as it touched his foot. It was an awful failure. The Biddleham forwards were down on him like a cartload of bricks. Then things grew lively. I couldn't follow the details, but, so far as I could judge, a faction fight wasn't halfway near it. Men were going down all over the place—singly, and in heaps. Scrummages were formed only to go to pieces. It was a regular riot. Suddenly someone broke away. It was Gilkes, with the leather tucked under his arm. Staines was after him, and so was Parker. Then we saw the first bit of play we had seen that afternoon. They closed on Gilkes, who passed to Staines, who passed to Parker. It was a beautiful bit of passing. Parker ran off to the left; Staines tripped in the mud. But Gilkes backed up in style. One of their three-quarters collared Parker, but not before he had passed again to Gilkes, who took it as well as ever I saw him take it yet. And there was nothing but the Biddleham back between Gilkes and the Biddleham goal.

Of course, under ordinary circumstances, he would have tried to drop it over. A better hand at a running drop-kick never lived than Gilkes. But let any man try to drop a ball which is full of

water, and which weighs a ton. He seemed to think that there was nothing for it but to carry it in. I thought he had done it, too; and all that was left was the shouting. But the Biddleham back was a man named Ashton, and he is about one of the few backs who is a back. Instead of waiting, he went for Gilkes. Gilkes tried to dodge; but dodging is not easy in the middle of the mire. He almost pulled it off; but, just as he was past, Ashton spun right round, and caught him a back-hander which knocked him down as neat as ninepence. Our fellows claimed a foul, but I don't think rightly. Ashton tried to grab at him, but, missing, knocked him down instead. Anyhow, the claim was disallowed. But Gilkes was spun. Ashton had caught him fairly on the nose. The blood came out of him in quarts. He had to retire to see if he couldn't stop the bleeding.

In the scrummage which followed, the Biddleham forwards played the same old game. They kept the ball in scrummage, and they kept falling down on top of us. Some of our men got riled. Blackmore, whose temper is not to be relied on, pretty nearly came to fighting one of theirs. He said that the man did nothing else but fall on him, which, if true, was certainly not nice. But I do hate to see a man lose his temper in a game. Try how they would, our fellows couldn't get the ball into play. Scrummage followed scrummage, and they were still scrummaging when the whistle blew half-time.

'Play loosely! Don't form scrummages at all! Directly the ball is down, try to rush it through. Or, if you can't do that, make them rush it through at once. Let those behind have a chance. I should think you've had enough of the mud.'

They had. Our blood was up. Well it might be! A more ragged regiment I never saw. There was scarcely a whole jersey among the lot, and they were so plastered with mud that I could hardly tell one from the other.

Directly ends were changed, there was a row—in consequence, I suppose, of our fellows' blood being up. Some people might have said there had been nothing but rows all through, and play had certainly been a little rough—but this was a regular row.

When the kick-off was returned, Blackmore, picking up the leather, tried a run. One of the Biddleham men, to collar him, caught him by the jersey, and, in so doing, ripped it off, and left Blackmore without a rag upon his back. That was not pleasant, and it is not supposed to be good form to try to collar a man by

snatching at his jersey. Still, that didn't justify Blackmore in doing what he did. He went for that Biddleham man, and snatched at his jersey, and tore it off his back.

'There,' he said, holding a fragment of the trophy in his hand, 'I think we're even.'

The Biddleham man didn't seem to think they were. He looked at Blackmore as though he would have liked to murder him. And his language, what I could hear of it, was not—I mean quite parliamentary. Of course play was stopped; and I thought that that would finish up the game as well. But Staines managed to smooth things over. Two fresh jerseys were brought, and play went on. But it didn't seem as though the incident had made either side much cooler—at least, so far as the lookers-on could judge.

Our men went in for loose play with a vengeance—I never saw much looser. Directly the ball was down they started kicking.

'No kicking in scrummages!' cried the Biddleham men.

'It's out of scrummage!' replied our fellows.

I didn't see myself how that could be, unless it was because it hadn't yet been in. But the Biddleham men didn't press the point, and nobody interfered. When they saw that our men *couldn't* be got to form a scrummage, they started free kicking too. To see the forwards on both sides hacking at the ball, and now and then at each other, anyhow, as they floundered about in the mud, gave the spectators an excellent idea of the science of the game.

Of course that sort of thing couldn't go on for long without there being another little shindy.

'You did that on purpose!' screamed out a voice. Play was stopped, and there was a Biddleham man nursing one leg and hopping about on the other, as though, instead of being stuck in the mud, he was dancing on red-hot plates. 'He did it on purpose!' he yelled again.

He didn't say who had done it on purpose, but he pulled down his stocking and showed as pretty a leg as I remember to have seen. The skin had been scraped off, and the shin-bone all laid bare. He sat down in the mud to look at it, and the men crowded round to sympathise. The referee came up and spoke to them. I didn't catch what it was he said, but I suspect he dropped a hint that if there wasn't just a little less hacking he'd stop the game.

Then play began again. That man with the scraped leg must have been a game one! He just tied his handkerchief round the place, and pulled his stocking up, and went on playing as though that sort of thing was not worth mentioning. That's how I like to see a man behave, especially when he's playing a game.

The fresh start was followed by a lot more scrummaging—about as loose scrummaging as ever I saw. It was all inside their twenty-five. And talk about handling! Each side was always claiming hands; and when the free-kick was got the ball could only be induced to travel a dozen feet or so. And tempers! There's not a better-tempered chap in the world than our old Staines, but even he got riled when one of their men continued to sit on his head a good half-minute after the ball had gone away.

'I'll trouble you not to do that again!' he remarked, as he staggered to his feet.

'How was I to know the ball had gone away?' cried the Biddleham man. There was a thing to say!

'I don't know if you're aware,' said Staines, who seemed half choked, 'that you've made me swallow a peck of mud?'

The Biddleham fellow laughed.

'Never mind, old fellow, you'll get it out again.'

But I could see that, if Staines didn't hate, quite as much as I do, to see a fellow lose his temper in a game, he would have set about that Biddleham beggar there and then. There can be no doubt that the play was rough—too much like the Cup Tie sort of thing for me.

Still, there were some lively episodes. And it isn't, necessarily, bad fun to look on at a row. Almost as good fun as being in it, if you listen to what some men say. And it certainly is the case that, since scientific play was out of the question on such an afternoon as that, there was some excuse for the fellows for trying to make things lively. When a man is tired of being trampled on, he's sure to try to trample on some other man, just by way of a little change. It's human nature. But I do hate to see men lose their tempers, even in a row. And a general row is what that game wound up with. I must own that I think the referee did let things go a little far. Perhaps, since he saw that there was no chance of sport, he, too, had no objection to seeing a little fun. I don't say that it was so, but on no other hypothesis can I understand why neither of the umpires, nor the referee, gave the signal for the row to cease. But what annoyed me

was this. After it was all over, and the match ended in a draw—for neither side scored more than the single try—as the men were going up to the pavilion I heard Blackmore say to the Biddleham man who had torn his jersey, ‘Next time you pull a man’s jersey off his back, I hope that man will teach you manners.’

The Biddleham man stopped short.

‘You can have a try at teaching me manners now, if you like.’

‘Can I? Then, just to oblige you, I think I will.’

And there was Blackmore making ready to fight the fellow there and then. Of course they interfered, and stopped the thing. But I do hate to see fellows lose their tempers, especially in a game.

I enjoyed that match uncommonly—almost as much as if I had played in it myself. No doubt there wasn’t much science shown, if any. What could you expect with the mud six inches deep, and the rain coming down in water-spouts? But there was something almost as good as science, and that is pluck. But there are people who can see nothing in Rugby Union football at all; to discuss the thing with folks like that is simply to throw your time away.

RATS.

RATS are as plentiful on the earth as sparrows in the air, and there is scarcely a corner of the globe to which they have not penetrated. Their wide distribution is to a great extent accounted for by the liking they evince towards ship stores; indeed, scarcely a vessel leaves our shores without its contingent of these four-footed passengers. In this manner rats have found their way to every part of the earth, for their eagerness to obtain water often leads them to leave ships in which this precious fluid is scarce. On such occasions they will not hesitate to swim to the shore if there is no way of reaching it dry-footed; or the mooring-rope sometimes serves them as a bridge, along which they crawl in Indian file. They frequently board ships in the same way, and it is a common habit with sailors to fill up the hawser-holes, or run the cable through a broom, the projecting twigs of which bar the ingress of the mischievous visitants. It is said that the only inhabitants of some islands of the Pacific are land-crabs and rats which have effected a landing there and have found themselves left behind. We do not propose, however, to attempt to follow the rat in its wanderings to different parts of the earth, but rather to deal with a few of the most noteworthy habits and characteristics of those members of the species which are to be found among us.

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The mischief that rats are capable of doing must be seen to be believed. If by any means they are able to gain access to a rick of corn, there is little chance of the owner ever obtaining enough grain from it to repay him for the trouble of thrashing. Though the rick may be perfectly sound to all outward appearance, its heart will be literally eaten away. But so long as care is exercised that the rick is properly built upon 'straddles,' these ever hungry animals need not be feared; for even if, as is often the case, they are thrown up, concealed in the sheaves, the want of water will soon compel them to evacuate the otherwise excellent quarters in which they find themselves. Mice can manage to quench their thirst by licking the drops of rain and dew from the eaves of the rick, but the more eager desire of rats for water is not to be met by such a measure as this, and they have little time for eating before a move becomes imperative. The mention of mice recalls the curious fact that when the same stack is occupied by them together with rats, the two never mix, but keep quite distinct, the mice in the upper, the rats in the lower parts of the stack.

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furious as rat after rat topples into the water, and, by morning, bedraggled corpses in plenty will gladden the eyes of the man whose losses at the teeth of rats have induced him to adopt this means of thinning their numbers. Some years ago the plan described above was tried in a City warehouse, with the result that more than three thousand rats were destroyed in a single night.

The rat is one of the pluckiest animals in existence when it is obliged to defend itself; a bulldog even has been seen to stand irresolute for a moment when confronted with one of these little animals, which, advancing to attack its powerful foe with tail erect, will often inflict the most severe wounds before being overcome. The bites of sewer-rats are very dangerous, and valuable dogs have often died from their effects. The garbage they eat affects their teeth, and transforms them into as deadly weapons as poisoned daggers. A large rat will more than hold its own even with one of its declared enemies, the ferrets. A gentleman, who wished to satisfy himself as to the truth of stories he had heard of the bold front presented by rats when cornered by a ferret, secured a strong specimen of each species and turned them loose in an empty room lighted by a single window. The rat, after running round the walls and satisfying itself that there was no means of escape, took up its position under the window, and there waited the enemy's attack with the advantage of the light behind it. The ferret, after sniffing about for a while, advanced, with head erect, towards the point where the scent of the other was strongest; and, though evidently puzzled by the glare of the light in his eyes, prepared to seize his foe. The rat waited until the ferret had approached within a couple of feet of the spot where it had taken its stand, and then, with a shrill squeal, rushed upon its adversary, inflicted a severe wound upon his neck, and retired to its former position. The ferret seemed very much taken aback at this sudden onslaught, and retreated some feet, but, after a moment's pause, again erected his head and made another advance, which was attended by precisely the same results as the first had been. He seemed more prepared for the rat's rush, but was not able to grapple with his active opponent, who gave him another bite, the severity of which was shown by the blood drawn. The contest continued in this manner for a couple of hours. The rat was careful to retain the position it had at first assumed, while the ferret was evidently fighting at a disad-

vantage from the light falling full on his eyes whenever he advanced to the attack. The gentleman, who had remained in the room all the time, thought he would see whether the rat's choice of position was accidental or designed, and walked over to the window, stationing himself close to the animal, which was acting on the defensive. Its natural alarm at his approach was, however, quite overcome by its unwillingness to leave that part of the floor, and it awaited the ferret's next advance standing actually between the legs of the interested spectator of this duel. Eventually the rat was driven to another part of the room; it seemed to lose courage when it found itself dispossessed of the advantage the light had given it, and met the attacks of the ferret in so half-hearted a manner that the latter was soon able to close with it and put an end to the struggle. Another fight of a similar nature was witnessed, in which the rat adopted precisely the same tactics, and, being undisturbed in the position it had taken up, eventually beat off the ferret, which was bitten so badly that it succumbed. These instances exemplify well the cunning of the rat; probably no other course would be so favourable for it in a fight with a ferret, whose object is to obtain a good grip of his antagonist and hang on until the latter is exhausted, a course which the obligation to face the light made as difficult as it could well have been.

Though the rat can be fierce when called upon to defend its life, there is a softer side to its character which is often brought out by contact with man. Many instances of this could be adduced similar to that of the omnibus-conductor's tame rat, which used to mount guard over its master's dinner and fly savagely at anyone who ventured to come near it. This animal had been caught during the removal of some hay, and spared because of its piebald coat. It was very attached to its owner's children, and would play about with them as merrily as a kitten. On cold nights it slept in its master's bed, nestling as closely to him as a chicken to its mother. In his memoirs, M. de la Tude, a Frenchman who fell under the displeasure of Madame de Pompadour in 1749, and was consequently imprisoned in the Bastille and other fortresses for thirty-five years, tells how he alleviated the tedium of his captivity by making companions of some rats. He was much annoyed for years by the rats, which at nightfall swarmed into his cell, hunting about for scraps of food, and sometimes biting his face when he was asleep. They entered by a hole which ventilated his dungeon; it

was about two feet above the floor, and under it were two steps on which he used to sit and breathe the fresh air as it entered. While seated there one day he noticed a large rat at the other end of the hole, and threw it a fragment of bread. This was snatched up, and was followed by more pieces until his supply was exhausted. The next day, at the same time, the rat was there again, and by throwing bread-crumbs so that they fell nearer and nearer to him the prisoner gradually induced his visitor to approach, until it finally took a piece from his hand. In a few days' time it was so tame that it would sit on his knee, washing its face and eating what scraps were given to it. One day it brought a companion, which became friendly almost at once, and after a little while the two rats took up their permanent residence in the dungeon. They occasionally went out through the hole, generally returning with another rat, and each new-comer made itself at home, until eventually M. de la Tude's cell was peopled by a family of ten of these rodents. He taught them all to recognise the names he gave them, and used to play with them for hours together. They learnt from him a number of tricks, and showed quite a spirit of rivalry in the way they went through their performances. The pleasure the captive found in this companionship is shown by the following extract from his memoirs : ' With these simple and innocent occupations I contrived for two years to divert my mind from constantly brooding over my miseries ; and now and then I surprised myself in a sensation of positive enjoyment. A bountiful Deity had no doubt created this solace for me ; and when I gave myself up to it, in those happy moments the world disappeared, I thought no longer of men and their barbarities, but was as in a dream. My intellectual horizon was bounded by the walls of my prison ; my senses, my reason, and my imagination were bounded by that narrow compass. I found myself in the midst of a family who loved and interested me ; why then should I wish to transport myself back into another hemisphere, where I had met with nothing but oppression and cruelty ? '

The attainments of the rat are not confined to the acquirement of mere tricks, for abroad troupes of these little creatures have been trained to go through theatrical performances. Dressed as men and women, they walked about the stage on their hind legs, and showed that they were capable of being educated to a far greater extent than is commonly supposed. The cleverness displayed by rats in their thieving shows them to possess great capabilities. It

is well known that they will extract oil from the most narrow-necked phial by dipping their tails into it and licking them, repeating the process until there is not a drop left. They show astonishing judgment in their predilection for eggs. If the theft is to be accomplished by a single rat, it stretches one of its fore-paws beneath the egg, steadies the burden above with its cheek, and hops gingerly away on three legs. Eggs have even been carried by rats from the top of a house to the bottom, though in such cases the thieves have to work in couples. An eye-witness of the removal of an egg by a pair of rats down a flight of stairs, states that when they got it to the top step the larger of the marauders jumped down and reared itself on its hind legs, so that its chin and fore-paws rested on the step above. The other then rolled the egg with the utmost care to the edge of the step, within reach of its confederate, who clasped the treasure firmly, lifted it down on to the step on which it stood, and held it there until the smaller one jumped down and assumed charge of it, when the larger descended a step lower and the process was repeated. In this manner these clever animals safely conveyed the egg down a long flight of stairs. The onlooker was so charmed at their adroitness that he had not the heart to prevent their making off with it completely. Rats have also been known to carry off eggs by transforming one of their number into a kind of sledge, and dragging it away by the tail, as it clasped the toothsome burden with all four paws, and bore without a dissentient squeal the discomfort of having its tail pulled and its back rasped along the floor. When tempting food is discovered on a shelf to which access is difficult, one rat will climb up and push sugar or candles over the edge to its expectant comrades waiting below.

The consideration shown by the rat for the aged and infirm members of its species speaks highly of its mental qualities. Several observers have witnessed a venerable blind rat guided in the migrations which these animals affect by a straw connecting its mouth with that of a younger member of the tribe. Mr. Purden, a surgeon's mate on board the 'Lancaster,' once, while lying in his berth, saw a rat emerge from a hole, peer cautiously round and retire, to presently reappear leading a grey old rodent by the ear. A third rat soon joined these two and assisted the one which had acted the part of guide to pick up scraps of biscuit and place them before the apparently blind old rat.

The Post Office was once saved considerable expense by the

assistance of a rat. As most people know, the main telegraph wires in London run through the subways in which the gas-pipes and sewers are placed. The principal arteries are so large that it is easy enough for men to work in them, but the pipes through which the side-wires branch off are much smaller, and great care has to be taken to preserve the connection between the main and the lateral wires. Some years ago men were repairing one of these latter, and carelessly omitted to attach it to a leading-line by which it could be drawn to its place when mended. The blunder seemed likely to have serious consequences, for it was thought that the whole of the lateral pipe would have to be dug up in order to get at the broken wire. But one of the men came to the rescue with a happy thought, suggesting that a rat should be procured, and, with a fine piece of wire attached to it, sent through the pipe. This was done; but, to the dismay of the workmen, the new hand came to a stop after it had gone a few yards. The inventor of this idea was not yet, however, at the end of his resources, and by his advice a ferret was procured and started on the dilatory rat's track. There was a moment of suspense before it was settled whether the rat would show fight or run away, but this was soon ended by the paying-out of the wire, and in a short time the latest addition to the staff of the Post Office appeared at the other end of the pipe. It was caught, the wire detached, and then it was set free in recognition of the service it had rendered. By means of the wire the telegraph line was secured, and a long and laborious piece of work saved.

Having said a good word for the rat, it will not be out of place to mention a generally unsuspected piece of evil which is frequently done by it. Rats can, and often do, fill the most healthy house with drain gases by making a passage from drain or cess-pool with their never-resting teeth. When planning the drainage of a house, the possibility of this should not be overlooked, and steps should be taken to prevent it by the use of such concrete as we have already described. The destructive and ceaseless gnawing of rats is, however, to a great extent a matter of necessity with them, for the construction of their teeth forces them to continually gnaw or perish. The rat's cutting instruments consist of four long and very sharp teeth, two in the upper and two in the lower jaw. The shape of these resembles that of a wedge, and they are always kept sharp by a wonderful provision of nature. The inner part of them is of a soft composition, resembling ivory,

which wears away easily, but which is protected by a covering of particularly hard enamel. In the act of gnawing, the upper teeth fit exactly into the lower, so that the soft part of each is perpetually worn away, while the enamel preserves a hard chisel-like edge. The growth of these teeth continues during the whole lifetime of the animal, with the result that they are renewed as fast as they are worn down. In consequence of this arrangement, if one of the four is broken off, the corresponding one continues to grow unchecked, in time protruding from the mouth, and turning upon itself until its luckless owner's jaws are completely locked. Cases have been known where a rat's under-tooth has run into the skull of the animal. In the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons there is a rat's incisor-tooth which has developed to such an enormous extent that it forms a complete circle and a segment of another, the diameter being sufficiently large to permit the insertion of the thumb. The rat emulates the fox in his skill at 'playing 'possum' when occasion arises. One has been taken up by the tail after having been apparently worried to death by a dog, carried about for some time with limbs motionless and muscles perfectly inactive, and, on being thrown down, has scampered away, seeming as full of life and energy as ever it was.

For some reason, which has never been satisfactorily explained, male rats outnumber their companions of the gentler sex by at least two to one. Were it not for the check placed upon their increase by this disparity in the numbers of the sexes, the spread of the species would be unendurably rapid. The cannibalistic habits of the rat are thought by some observers to be responsible for this incongruity, as the flesh of the female is more tender than that of the male. In times of scarcity, the weaker rats are invariably sacrificed to the appetites of the stronger, and, like wolves, these little savages will fall upon and devour any of their number that may be wounded. Rats execute their marauding raids with a rapidity which is simply wonderful. The writer was made unpleasantly aware of this by the suddenness with which a promising family of ducklings were carried off one morning. At eight o'clock the brood of fourteen was fed and counted; at ten minutes past the hour one little black duckling was the sole survivor. Spots of blood along the ground showed that the rats had dragged their victims down some holes in an outhouse, and on digging there the thirteen ducklings were found, none of them

more than a foot or two under ground. A regular troop of rats must have been on the watch to attack the little fluffy balls when their food was claiming all their attention; and considerable promptness must have been required to despatch the thirteen, drag them over ten or twelve yards of ground, and out of sight down the holes, in the short space of ten minutes.

In common with other animals, rats appear to possess a marvellous prescience of coming misfortune. Their desertion of doomed ships has passed into a proverb, and they have been known to show the same power of second-sight in the case of buildings. In October, 1853, a mill at Peebles was burnt down, and several hours before the catastrophe a body of rats, amounting in number to at least a hundred, were seen to leave the building and make their way to some wheat-stacks in the neighbourhood.

Commercially, the rat is usually considered valueless, though it is said that fine gloves are in some places made out of its skin. At the Siege of Paris this animal was looked upon as a luxury, and plump specimens fetched good prices. Indeed, if we are to believe the statements made by the Rev. J. G. Wood, whose death has left so great a blank in the ranks of naturalists, and those of one who was in his day scarcely less popular—the late Frank Buckland—‘rat-pie’ is a delicacy which has claims to the attention of the most fastidious epicure. Not long before his decease Mr. Wood said, during a course of lectures, that there was literally no kind of food of which he was more fond than ‘rat-pie,’ adding that the dish frequently appeared at his table, and was highly appreciated by the members of his family and those of their friends who had overcome their first repugnance to it.

THE COLONEL'S BOY.

A STRANGER, coming upon the Colonel as he sat in the morning-room of the club regarding his newspaper with an angelic smile, would have sought out another copy of the paper and searched its columns with pleasant anticipations. But I knew better. I knew that the Colonel, though he had put on his glasses and was pretending to cull the news, was really only doing what I verily believe he did after lunch and after dinner, and after he got into bed, and indeed at every one of those periods when the old campaigner, with a care for his digestion and his conscience, selects some soothing matter for meditation. He was thinking of his boy; and I went up to him and smacked him on the shoulder. 'Well, Colonel,' I said, 'how is Jim?'

'Hullo! Why, it's Jolly Joe Bratton!' he replied, dropping his glasses and gripping my hand tightly—for we did not ride and tie at Inkerman for nothing. 'The very man I wanted to see.'

'And Jim, Colonel? How is the boy?' I asked.

'Oh, just as fit as a—middy on shore!' he answered, speaking jollily, yet, as it seemed to me, with an effort, so that I wondered whether there was anything wrong with the boy—a little bill or two, or some small indiscretion, such as might well be pardoned in as fine a lad as ever stepped, with a six-months-old commission, a new uniform, and a station fifty minutes from London. 'But come,' the Colonel continued before I could make any observation, 'you have lunched, Joe? Will you take a turn?'

'To be sure,' I said; 'on one condition—that you let Kitty give you a cup of tea afterwards.'

'That is a bargain!' he answered heartily; and we went into the hall. Everyone knows the 'Junior United' hall. I had reached my hat down, and was in the act of stepping back from the rack, when someone coming down stairs two at a time—that is the worst of having anyone under field rank in a club—hit me sharply with his elbow. Perhaps my coat fits a bit tightly round the waist nowadays, and perhaps not; any way, I particularly object to being poked in the back—it may be a fad of mine, or it may not—and I turned round sharply, muttering, 'Confound——'

I did not say any more, seeing who had done it; but my gentleman stammered some confused apology, and taking from the Colonel, who had politely picked it up, a letter which it seemed I had knocked out of his hand, he passed into the morning-room with a red face. 'Clumsy scoundrel!' I said, but not so loudly that he could hear it.

'Hullo!' the Colonel exclaimed, standing still, and looking at me with undisguised wonder.

'Well?' I said, perhaps rather testily. 'What is the matter?'

'You are not on good terms with young Farquhar, then?'

'I am not on any terms at all with him,' I answered grumpily.

The Colonel whistled. 'Indeed!' he said, looking down at me with a kind of wistfulness in his eyes; Dick is tall, and I am—well, I was up to standard once. 'I thought—that is, Jim told me—that he was a good deal about your house, Joe. And I rather gathered that he was making up to Kitty, don't you know?'

'You did, did you?' I grunted. 'Well, perhaps he was, and perhaps he wasn't. Any way, she is not for him. And he would not take an answer, the young whipper-snapper!' I continued, giving my anger a little vent, and feeling all the better for it. 'He came persecuting her, if you want to know, and I had to show him the door.'

I think I never saw a man—certainly on the steps of the 'Junior United'—look more pleased than did the Colonel at that moment. 'Gad!' he said, 'then Jim will have a chance?'

'Ho! ho!' I answered, chuckling. 'So the wind sets in that quarter, does it? A chance? I should think he would have a chance, Colonel!'

'And you do not object?'

'Object?' I said. 'Why, it would make me the happiest man in the world, Dick. Are we not the oldest friends? And I have only Kitty and you have only Jim. Why it is—it is just Inker-man over again!'

Really it was, and we stumped down the steps in high delight. Only I felt a little anxious about Kitty's answer, for though I had a strong suspicion that her affections were inclined in the right direction, I could not be sure. The gay young soldier might not have won her heart as he had mine: so that I was still more pleased when the Colonel informed me that he believed Jim intended to put it to the test this very afternoon.

'She is at home,' I said, standing still.

'Ha! ha! ha!' he responded, taking my arm to lead me on.

But I declined to move. 'I'll tell you what,' I said—'it is a quarter to four; if Jim has not popped the question by now, he is not the man I think him. Let us go home, Colonel, and hear the news.'

He demurred a little, but I had him in a hansom in two shakes, and we were bowling along Piccadilly in half-a-dozen more. Suddenly he uttered an exclamation, and, following the direction of his hand, I was just in time to catch a glimpse of Jim's face—no other's—as he shot past us in a cab going eastwards. It left us in no doubt, for the lad's cheeks were flushed and his eyes shining, and as he swept by and momentarily saw us, he raised his hat with a gesture of triumph.

'Gad!' exclaimed the Colonel, 'I'll bet a guinea he has kissed her! Happy dog!'

'Tra! la! la!' I answered. 'I dare swear we shall not find Kitty in tears.'

The words were scarcely out of my mouth when the cab swerved suddenly to one side, throwing me against my companion. I heard our driver shout, and caught sight of a bareheaded man mixed up with the near shaft. The next moment we gave a great lurch and stopped, and a little crowd came round us. The Colonel was the first out, but I joined him as quickly as I could. 'I do not think he is much hurt, sir,' I heard the policeman say. 'He is drunk, I fancy. Come, old chap, pull yourself together,' he continued, giving a slight shake to the grey-haired man whom he and a bystander were supporting. 'There, hold up now. Here is your hat. You are all right.'

And sure enough the man, whose red nose and shabby attire seemed to lend probability to the policeman's accusation, managed when left to himself to keep his balance—with some wavering. 'Hullo!' he muttered, looking uncertainly upon the crowd round him. 'Is my son here to take me home? Isaac? Where is Isaac?'

'He is a bit shaken,' said the policeman, viewing him with an air of experience. 'And three parts drunk besides. He had better go to the station.'

'Where do you live?' said the Colonel.

'Greek Street, Soho, number twenty-seven, top floor'—this was answered glibly enough. 'And I'll tell you what,' the man added with a drunken hiccough and a sudden reel which left him on the

policeman's shoulder—'if any gentleman will take another gentleman home, I will make him rich beyond the dreams of avarice. I'll present him his weight in gold. That I will. His weight in gold!'

'I think——' the Colonel began, turning and meeting my eye.

'His weight in gold!' murmured the drunken man.

'Quite so!' I said, accepting the Colonel's unspoken suggestion. 'We will see him home all right, policeman.' And paying our cabman, I hailed a crawling four-wheeler, into which the officer promptly bundled our man. We got in, and in a moment were jolting eastwards again at a snail's pace.

'Perhaps we might have sent someone else with him,' said the Colonel, looking at me apologetically.

'Not at all!' I answered. I have no doubt that we both had the same feeling, that being happy ourselves it would not ill become us to do a good turn to this poor old wretch, whose shaking hands and tattered clothes showed that he had almost reached the bottom of the hill. I have seen more than one brother officer, once as gallant a lad as Jim, brought as low, and perhaps, but for Providence, old Joe Bratton himself—— But there, it may have been some such thought as this, or it may have been an extra glass of sherry at lunch, made us take the man home. We did it; and the Lord only knows why fellows do things—good or bad.

Hauling out our charge at the door of twenty-seven, we lugged him up the dingy stairs, the gibberish which he never ceased to repeat about the dreams of avarice and our weight in gold sounding ten times as absurd on the common staircase of this dirty tenth-rate lodging-house. The attic gained, he straightened himself, and, winking at us with drunken gravity, laid his hand upon the latch of one of the doors. 'You shall see—what you shall see!' he muttered, and throwing open the door he stumbled into the room. The Colonel raised his eyebrows in a protest against our folly, but entered after him, and I followed.

There was only one person in the garret, which was as miserable and poverty-stricken as room could well be; and he rose and confronted us with an exclamation of anger. He was a young fellow, twenty years old perhaps, of middle size, sallow and dark-eyed, and to my thinking half-starved. The drunken man seemed unaware of his feelings, however, for he balanced himself on the floor between us, and waved his hand towards him.

'Here you are, gentlemen!' he cried. 'I'm a man of my word! Allow me to introduce you! My son, Isaac Gold. Did not I tell you? Present you—your weight in gold—or nearly so.'

'Father!' said the lad, eyeing him gloomily, 'go and lie down.'

'Ha! ha! Your weight in gold, gentlemen!'

'Your father was knocked down by a cab,' the Colonel said quietly, 'and finding that he was not able to take care of himself we brought him home.'

The young man looked at us furtively, but did not answer. Instead, he took his father by the arm and forced him gently to a mattress which lay in one corner, half hidden by a towel-rail—the latter bearing at present a shirt, evidently home-washed and hung out to dry. Twice the old fool started up muttering the same rubbish; but the third time he went off into a heavy sleep. There was something pitiful to my eyes in the boy's patience with him: so that when the lad at last turned to us and, with eyes which fiercely resented our presence, bade us begone if we had satisfied our curiosity, I was not surprised that the Colonel held his ground. 'I am afraid you are badly off,' he said gently.

'What's that to you?' was the other's insolent answer. 'Do you want to be paid for your services?'

'Steady! steady, my lad!' I put in. 'You get nothing by that.'

'I think I know you,' the Colonel continued, regarding him steadily. 'There was a charge preferred against you, or someone of your name, at a police-office a few weeks ago, of personating a candidate at the examination for commissions in the army. The charge failed, I know.'

The young man's colour rose as the Colonel spoke; but his manner indicated rather triumph than shame, and his dark eyes sparkled with malice as he retorted: 'It failed? Yes, you are right there. You have been in the army yourself, I dare say.'

'I have,' said the Colonel gravely.

'An honourable profession, is it not?' the lad continued in a tone of biting mockery. 'How many of your young friends, do you think, passed in honestly? It is a competitive examination, too, mind you. And how many do you think employed me—me—to pass for them?'

'You should be ashamed to boast of it,' said the Colonel, 'even if you are not afraid.'

'And what should they be? Tell me that!'

'They are low, mean scoundrels, whoever they are.'

'So! so! You think so!' laughed the young fellow triumphantly. And then all at once the light seemed to die out of his keen, clever face, and I saw before me only a half-starved lad, with his shabby clerk's coat buttoned up to his throat to hide the want of a shirt. The same change was visible, I think, to the Colonel's eye, for he looked at me and muttered something about the cab; and understanding that he wanted a word with the young fellow alone, I went to the window and for a moment or so pretended to gaze through its murky panes. When I turned, the two men were talking by the door; the drunken father was snoring behind his improvised screen; and on a painted deal table beside me I remarked the one and only article of luxury in the room—a small soiled album. With a grunt I threw it open. It disclosed the portraits of two lads, simpering whiskerless faces, surmounting irreproachable dog-collars and sporting pins. I turned a page and came on two more bearing a family resemblance in features, dog-collars, and pins to the others. I turned again, with a pish! and a pshaw! and found a vacant place, and opposite it—a portrait of Jim!

I stared at it for a moment in unthinking wonder, and then in a twinkling it flashed across me what these portraits were, and above all, what this portrait of Jim placed in this scoundrel's album meant. I remembered how anxious the Colonel had been as the lad's examination drew near; how bitterly he had denounced the competitive system, and vowed a dozen times a day that, what with pundits and crammers and young officers who should have been girls and gone to Girton, the service was going to the dogs—'To the dogs, do you hear me, sir!' And then I recalled his great relief when the boy came out quite high up; ay, and the vast change which had at once taken place in his sentiments: 'We must move with the times, sir; it is no good running your head against a brick wall,' and so forth. And—well, I let fall a pretty strong word, at which the Colonel turned sharply.

'What is it, Major?' he said. But, seeing me standing still by the window, he turned again and added to the young man beside him, 'Well, you think about it, and let me know at that address. Now,' he continued, advancing towards me, 'what is it, Joe?'

‘What is what?’ I said grumpily. I had shut the album by this time, and was standing between him and the table on which it lay. I do not know why—perhaps it came of the kindness he had just been doing—but I noticed in a way I had never noticed before what a fine figure of a man, tall and straight and noble, my old comrade still was. And a bit of a dimness, such as I have experienced once or twice lately when I have taken a third glass of sherry at lunch, came over my sight. ‘Confound it!’ I said.

‘What is it?’ he asked.

‘Something in my eye!’

‘Let me get it out,’ he said—always the kindest fellow under the sun.

‘No! I’ll get it out myself!’ I snarled like a bear with a sore head. And on that, without stopping to explain, I plunged out of the room and down the stairs. The Colonel, wondering no doubt what was the matter with me, followed more leisurely, pausing to say a last kindly word to that young rascal at the door, whom I had not had the patience to speak to: so that I had already closed a warm dispute with the cabman, by sending him off with a flea in his ear and his fare to a sixpence, when he overtook me.

‘What is up, Joe?’ he asked, laying his hand on my shoulder.

‘That d——d dizziness—but there, I have always said the ’73 sherry at the club is not sound—came over me again. I do not feel quite up to the mark,’ I continued with perfect truth. ‘I think I will go home alone, Colonel, if you do not mind.’

‘I do mind,’ said he, stoutly. ‘You may want an arm.’ But somehow I made it clear to him that I would rather be alone, and that the walk would do me good, and he got at last into a hansom and drove off, his grey moustache and fine old nose peering at me round the side of the cab, until a corner hid him altogether.

I had walked on a few paces, waving my umbrella cheerfully; but there I stopped, and, retracing my steps, mounted the staircase of twenty-seven, and without parley opened the door. The young fellow we had left was pacing the floor restlessly, turning over in his mind, I suspected, what the Colonel had said to him. He stood still on seeing me, and then glanced round the room. ‘Have you forgotten anything?’ he said.

‘Nothing, young man,’ I answered. ‘I want to ask you a question.’

'You can ask,' he replied, eyeing me askance.

'That album,' I said, pointing to it—'it contains, I suppose, the photographs of the people you have been employed to personate?'

'Possibly.'

'But does it?'

'I did not know,' he said slowly, in the most provoking manner, 'that I had to do with a detective. What is the charge?'

'There is no charge,' I answered, keeping my temper really admirably. 'But I have seen the face of a friend of mine in that book, and I'll—in a word, I'll be hanged, young man, if I don't learn all about it!' I continued. 'All—do you hear? So there! Now, out with it, and do not keep me waiting, you young rascal!'

He only whistled and stared; and finding I was perhaps getting a little warm, I took out my handkerchief, and wiping my forehead, sat down, the thought of the Colonel's grief taking all the strength out of me. 'Look here,' I said in a different tone, 'I'll take back what I have just said, and I give you my word of honour I do not want to harm the young man. But I have seen his portrait, and, if I know no more, must think the worst. Now I will give you a ten-pound note if you will answer three questions.'

He shook his head; but I saw that he hesitated. 'I did not show you the portrait,' he said. 'If you have seen it, that is your business. But I will name no names.'

'I want none,' I answered hurriedly. I threw open the album at the tell-tale photograph, and laid my trembling finger on the face. 'Was this sent to you that you might personate the original?'

He nodded.

'From what place?'

He considered a moment. Then he said reluctantly: 'From Frome, in Somerset, I think.'

'Last year?'

He nodded again. Alas! Jim had been at a crammer's near Frome. Jim had passed his examination during the last year. took out the money and gave it to the man; and a minute late I was standing in the street with a sentence heard more than once at mess in the old days ringing in my ears: 'Refer it to the Colonel! He is the soul of honour.'

The soul of honour! Umph! What would he think of this?

The soul of honour!—and his son, his son Jim, had done this! I walked through the streets in a kind of amaze. I had loved the boy right well myself, and was ready to choke on my own account when I thought of him. But his father—I knew that his father was wrapped up in him. His father had been a mother to him as well, and that for years—had bought him toys as a lad, and furnished his quarters later with things of which only a mother would have thought. It would kill his father.

I wiped my forehead slowly as I thought of this and put my latch-key into the door in Pont Street. I walked in with a heavy sigh—I do not know that I ever entered with so sad a heart—and the next moment, with a flutter of skirts, Kitty was out of the dining-room, where I do not doubt she had been watching for me, and in my arms. Before Heaven! until I saw her I had not thought of her—I had never considered her at all in connection with this matter, or how I should deal with her, until I heard her say with her face on my shoulder, and her eyes looking up to mine: ‘Oh, father, father, I am so happy! Please, wish me joy.’

Wish her joy! I could not. I could only mutter, ‘St! wait, girl—wait, wait!’ and lead her into the dining-room, and, turning my back on her, go to the window and look out—though for all I saw I might have had my head in a soot-bag. She was alarmed of course—but to save her that I could not face her—and came after me and clung to my arm, asking me again and again what it was.

‘Nothing, nothing,’ I said. ‘There—wait a minute; don’t you know that I shall lose you?’

‘Father,’ she said sharply, trying to look into my face, ‘it is not that. You know you will not lose me! There is something else the matter. Ah! Jim went in a cab, and—’

‘Jim is all right,’ I answered roughly, feeling her hand fall from my arm. ‘In that way at any rate.’

‘Then I am not afraid,’ she answered stoutly, ‘if you and Jim are all right.’

‘Look here, Kitty,’ I said, making up my mind, ‘sit down, I want to talk to you.’

And she did sit down, and I told her all. With some girls it might not have been the best course; but Kitty is not like most of the girls I meet nowadays—one half of whom are blue stockings, with no more aptitude for the duties of wives and mothers

than the statuettes in a shop window, and the other half are misses in white muslin, who are always either giggling pertly or sitting with their thumbs in their mouths. Kitty is a companion, a helpmeet, God bless her! She knows that Wellington did not fight at Blenheim, and she does not think that Lucknow is in the Crimea. She knows no Greek and she loves dancing—her very eyes dance at the thought of it. But she would rather sit at home with the man she loves than waltz at Marlborough House. And if she has not learned a little fortification on the sly, and does not know how many men stand between Jim and his company—I am a Dutchman! Lord! when I see a man marry a girl for a pretty face—not that Kitty has not a pretty face, and a sweet one too, no thanks to her father—I wonder whether he has considered what it will be to sit opposite my lady at, say, twenty thousand nine hundred meals on an average! Phaugh! That is the test, sir.

So I told Kitty all, and the way she took it showed me that I was right. 'What!' she exclaimed, when I had finished the story, to which she had listened breathlessly, with her face half turned from me, and her arm on the mantel-piece, 'is that all, father?'

'My dear,' I said sadly, 'you do not understand.' I remembered how often I had heard—ay, and sometimes noticed—that women's ideas of honour differ from men's.

'Understand!' she retorted, fiery hot. 'I understand that you think Jim has done this thing—this mean, miserable, wretched thing. Father,' she continued, turning with sudden earnestness and laying both her hands on my shoulders, so that her brave grey eyes looked into my eyes, 'if three people came to you and told you that I had gone into your bedroom and taken money from the cash-box in your cupboard to pay some bill of mine, and that when I had done it I had kept it from you, and told stories about it—if three, four, five people told you that they had seen me do it, would you believe them?'

'Never, Kitty,' I said, smiling against my will, 'not though five angels told me so, my dear. It would be absurd. I know you too well.'

'And this is absurd—absurd, do you hear, father? Do you think I do not know him—and love him?'

And the foolish girl, who had begun to waltz round the room like a mad thing, stopped suddenly and looked at me with tears in her eyes and her lips quivering.

I could not but take some comfort from her confidence.

'Certainly,' I said. 'The Colonel brought him up, and it seems hardly possible that the lad should turn out so bad. But the photograph, my girl—the photograph? What do you say to that? It was Jim, I can swear. I could not be mistaken. There could not be another so like him.'

'There is no one like him,' she answered softly.

'Very well. And then I have noticed that he has been in bad spirits lately. A bad conscience, I fear.'

'You dear old donkey!' she answered, shaking me with both her little hands. 'That was about me. He has told me all that. He thought Mr. Farquhar—Mr. Farquhar, indeed!'

'Oh, that was it, was it?' I said. 'Well, that may account for his depression of spirits. But look you here, Kitty; was he not rather nervous about his examination?'

'A little,' she answered with reluctance.

'And, nevertheless, did he not come out tolerably high?'

'Seventeenth. Thirteen thousand four hundred and twenty-six marks,' Kitty replied glibly.

'Umph! And if he had failed he would have suffered in your eyes?'

'Not a scrap. And, besides, he did not fail,' she retorted.

'But he may have thought he would suffer,' I answered, 'if he failed. That would be a sharp temptation, Kitty.'

She did not reply at once. She was busy rolling up some ribbon of her frock into the smallest possible compass, and unrolling it again. At last she said:

'I know he did not do it, but that is all I do know. I cannot prove to you that white is not black, but it is not, and I know it is not.'

'Well, my dear, I hope you are right,' I answered. And it cheered me to find that she at least was worthy of confidence.

She promised readily to let me have the first word with the lad when he called next day; and as for undertaking to have nothing more to do with him if the charge should prove to be true, she made nothing of that—because, as she said, it really meant nothing.

'A Jim who had done that would not be my Jim at all,' she explained gaily, 'but quite a different Jim—a James, sir.'

Certainly, a girl's faith is a wonderful thing. And hers so far affected me that I regretted I had not taken a bolder course, and,

showing the photograph to the Colonel, had the whole thing threshed out on the spot. Possibly I might have saved myself a very wretched hour or two. But no, on second thoughts I could not see how the boy could be innocent. I could not help piecing the evidence together—the damning evidence, as it seemed to me—the certain identity of Jim with the original of the photograph, the arrival of the latter from Frome, where the lad had spent the last weeks previous to his examination, the fears he had expressed before the ordeal, and his success beyond his hopes at it; these things seemed almost conclusive. I had only the boy's character, his father's training, and his sweetheart's faith, to set against them.

His sweetheart's faith, did I say? Ah, well! when I came down to breakfast next morning, whom should I find in tears—and she, as a rule, the most equable girl in the world—but Kitty.

'Hullo!' I said. 'What is all this?'

At the sound of my voice she sprang to her feet; she had been kneeling by the fireplace groping with her hands inside the fender. Her cheeks were crimson, and she was crying—yes, certainly crying, although she had tried by a hasty dab of the flimsy thing she calls a pocket-handkerchief to remove the traces.

'Well!' I said, for she was dumb. 'What is it, my dear?'

'I have—torn up a letter,' she answered, a little sob dividing the sentence into two.

'So I see,' I answered dryly. 'And now, I suppose, you are sorry for it.'

'It was a horrid letter, father,' she cried, her eyes shining like electric lamps in a shower—'about Jim.'

'Indeed,' I said, with a very nasty feeling inside me. 'What about Jim? And why did you tear it up, my dear? One half of it, I should say, has gone into the fire.'

'It was from—a woman!' she answered.

And presently she told me that the letter, which was unsigned, accused Jim of having played with the affections of the writer, and warned Kitty to be on her guard against him, and not to be a party to the wrong he was doing an innocent girl.

'Pooh!' I said, with a contemptuous laugh. 'That cock will not fight, my dear. It has been tried over and over again. You do not mean to say that that has made you cry? Why, if so, you are—you are just as big a fool as any girl I ever knew.' And,

indeed, I was surprised to find that Kitty's faith in her lover, which had been proof against a charge made on good evidence, failed before an uncorroborated, unsigned accusation, because, forsooth, it mentioned a woman. 'What postmark did it bear?' I asked.

'Frome,' she murmured.

This was certainly odd—very odd. Pretty devilments I knew those fellows at crammers' were up to sometimes. Could it be that we were all mistaken in Master Jim, as I have once or twice known a lad's family and home friends to be mistaken in him? Was he all the time an out-and-out bad one? Or had he some enemy at Frome plotting against his happiness? This seemed a romantic notion, and absurd besides, since we had lit upon Isaac Gold by a chance, and on the portrait by a chance within a chance, and no enemy, however acute—not Machiavelli himself—could have foreseen the *rencontre* or arranged the circumstances which had led me to the photograph. Therefore, though the anonymous letter might be the work of an ill-wisher, I did not see how the other could be. However, I gathered up the few fragments of writing which had escaped the fire, and put them carefully aside, to serve, if need be, for evidence.

Indeed, I had just made up my mind sternly and sorrowfully that I must put an end to all matters between Jim and my girl unless he should clear himself of these suspicions—when what should I hear but his voice, and his father's, in the hall. There is something in the sound of a familiar voice which so recalls our past knowledge of the speaker that I can think of nothing which pierces the cloud of doubt more thoroughly. At any rate, when the two came in, I jumped up and gave a hand to each. Behind Jim's back one might suspect him; confronted by his laughing eyes, and his brown, honest, boyish face—well, by the Lord! I would as soon have suspected my old comrade, God bless him!

'Jim,' I found myself saying, his hand in mine, and every one of my prudent resolutions gone to the wind, 'Jim, my boy, I am a happy man. Take her and be good to her, and God bless you! No, Colonel, no,' I continued in desperate haste, 'I do not ask a question. Let the lad take her. If your son cannot be trusted no one can. There, I am glad that is settled.'

I verily believe I was almost blubbing; and though I meant to say only what I should have said if this confounded matter had never arisen, I let drop, it seems, enough to set the Colonel ques-

tioning, for in five minutes I had told him the whole story of the photograph.

It was pleasant to observe his demeanour. Though he never for a moment lost his faith in Jim—mind, he had not seen the portrait—and his eyes continued to shoot little glances of confidence at his son, he drew back his chair and squared his shoulders, and altogether assumed a judicial air.

'Now, sir,' he said, with his hands on his knees, 'this must be explained. We are much obliged to the Major for bringing it to our notice. You will be good enough to explain, my lad.'

Jim did explain; or rather, when he answered frankly that he had never heard Isaac Gold's name before, and certainly had never given him a photograph, I believed him; and when he jumped up with his usual impetuosity and proposed to go at once to Gold's house and see the photograph, I was delighted. In half a minute we were in a cab, and in ten more had the good luck to discover only old Gold at home. A five-shilling-piece slipped into the drunkard's hand sufficed to obtain for us the view we desired.

'I suppose it is a likeness of me,' Jim murmured, looking hard at the photograph.

'Certainly it is!' replied the Colonel rather curtly. Up to this moment he had thought me deceived by some chance resemblance.

'Then let us see who took it, and where it was printed,' Jim answered in a matter-of-fact tone. 'I do not believe I have ever been taken in this dress. See, it bears no photographer's name; probably an amateur has taken it. Let me think.'

While he thought, old Gold potted about the open door of the room on the watch for Isaac's return. 'Yes,' said Jim at last, 'I think I have it. I was photographed in this dress as one of a group before a meet of the hounds at old Bulcher's.'

'At Frome?'

'Yes. And this has been enlarged, I have no doubt, from the head in the group. But why, or who has done it, or how it comes to be here, I know no more than you do.'

At this moment young Gold's footsteps were heard outside. He seemed to have some suspicion that his secrets were in danger, for he came up the stairs three at a time, and bounced into the room, looking for a moment, as his eyes lit on us and the open album, as if he would knock us all down. When his glance fell

on Jim, however, a change came over him. It was singular to see the two looking at one another, Jim eyeing him with the supercilious stare of the boy-officer, and he returning the look with a covert recognition in his dark defiant eyes. 'Well,' said Jim, 'do you know me?'

'I have never seen you before to my knowledge.'

'Perhaps you will explain then how you came by this photograph?'

'That is my business!' said Gold sternly.

'Oh, is it?' retorted Jim with fire. 'We will see about that.' I think it annoyed him, as it certainly did me, to detect in the other's glance and tone a subtle meaning—a covert understanding. 'If you do not explain, I'll—I will call in the police, my man.'

But here the Colonel interfered. He told me afterwards that he felt some sympathy for Gold. He summarily silenced Jim, and, telling the other that he should hear from him again, led us downstairs. I noticed that, as we passed out into the street, he slipped his arm through his son's, and I have no doubt he managed to convey to the young fellow as plainly as by words that his faith in him was unshaken.

Very naturally, however, Jim was not satisfied with this or with the present position of things, which was certainly puzzling. 'But, look here!' he said, suddenly standing still in the middle of the pavement, 'what is to be done, sir? That fellow believes or pretends to believe, though he will not say a word, that I have used him to do my dirty work. And I have not! Then why the deuce should he parade my photograph? Do you think—by George! I believe I have got it—do you think it is a case of blackmail?'

'No,' said the Colonel with decision, 'it cannot be. We came upon the photograph of ourselves and by the purest accident. It was not sent to us, or used against you. No! But look here, I say!' The Colonel in his turn stopped suddenly in the middle of the pavement and struck the latter with his stick. He had got his idea. His eyes sparkled.

'Well?' we said.

'Suppose some other fellow employed Gold to pass the examination, and, having this very fear of being blackmailed in his mind, got a photograph of a friend tolerably like himself, and sent it up instead of his own? What then?'

'Ho! ho! What then? Precisely!' I said. We all nodded

to one another like so many Chinese mandarins, and the Colonel looked proudly at his son, as though saying, 'Now what do you think of your father, my boy?'

'I think you have hit it, sir!' said Jim, answering the unspoken question. 'There were nearly thirty fellows at Bulcher's.'

'And among them there was a low rascal—a low rascal, sir,' replied the Colonel, his eyes sparkling, 'who did not even trust his own companion in iniquity, but arranged to have an answer ready if his accomplice should turn upon him! "I suborned him?" he would say when charged—"I deny it. He has my name pat enough, but has he any proof? A photograph? But that is not my photograph?" Do you see, Major?'

'I see,' I said. 'And now come home with me, both of you, and we will talk it over with Kitty.'

By this time, however, it was two o'clock. Jim, who had only arranged for a flying visit, found he must resign all hope of seeing Kitty to-day, and take a cab to Charing Cross if he would catch his train back. The Colonel had a luncheon engagement—for which he was already late—and so we separated then and there in somewhat of a hurry. When I got back the first question Kitty—who, you may be sure, met me in the hall—asked me was: 'Where is Jim, father?' The second: 'And what does he say about the letter?'

'God bless my soul!' I exclaimed, 'I never gave a thought to it. I am afraid I never mentioned it, my dear. I was thinking about the photograph. I fancy we have got nearly to the bottom of that.'

'Pooh!' she said. And, upon my word, she pretended to take very little interest in the explanation I gave her, though—the sly little cat!—when I dropped the subject, she was quite ready to take it up again, rather than not talk about Jim at all.

I am sometimes late for breakfast; she rarely or never. But next morning on entering the dining-room I found the table laid for one only, and Matthews the maid waiting modestly before the coffee-pot. 'Where is Miss Bratton?' I said grumpily, taking the 'Times' from the fender. 'Miss Kitty had a headache,' was the answer, 'and was taking a cup of tea in bed.' 'Ho, ho!' thought I, 'this comes of being in love! Confound the lads! Sausage? No, I won't have sausage. Who the deuce ordered sausages at this time of year? Bacon? Umph!—seems half done. This coffee is thick. There, that will do. Don't rattle those

cups and saucers all day! Confound the girl!—do you hear? You can go!’ The way women bully a man when they get him alone is a caution.

When I returned from my morning stroll, I heard voices in the dining-room, and looked in to see how Kitty was. Well, she was—in brief, there was just a scene going on. Miss Kitty, her cheeks crimson and her eyes shining, was standing with her back to the window; and facing her, half angry and half embarrassed, was Jim. ‘Hoity toity, you two!’ I said, closing the door behind me. ‘These are early times for this kind of thing. What is up?’

‘I’ll be hanged if I know, sir!’ said Jim, looking rather foolish.

‘What have you got there, my dear?’ I continued, for Kitty had one hand behind her, and I was not slow to connect this hand with the scornful expression on her pretty face.

‘He knows,’ she said, trembling with anger—the little vixen.

‘I know nothing!’ returned Jim sheepishly. ‘I came in, and when I—Kitty flew out and attacked me, don’t you see, sir?’

‘Very well, my dear,’ I answered, ‘if you do not feel able to explain, Jim had better go. Only, if he goes now, of course I cannot say when he will come back.’

‘I will come back, Kitty, whenever you will let me,’ said the young fool.

‘Shut your mouth, sir,’ I replied. ‘Now, Kitty, attend to me. What is it?’

‘Ask him—to whom he gave his photograph at Frome!’ she said, in a breathless sort of way.

‘His photograph? Why, that is just what we were talking about yesterday,’ I replied sharply. ‘I thought it did not interest you, my girl, when I told you all about it last night.’

‘That photograph!’—with withering contempt—‘I do not mean *that*! Do you think I suspect him of *that*?’ She stepped forward as though to go to him, and her face altered wonderfully. Then she recollected herself and fell back. ‘No,’ she said coldly, ‘to what woman, sir, did you give your photograph at Frome?’

‘To no woman at all,’ he said emphatically.

‘Then look at this!’ she said. She held out as she spoke a photograph, which I identified at once as the portrait we had seen at Gold’s, or a copy of that one. I snatched it from Jim with an exclamation. ‘Where did you get this, my girl?’ I asked briskly.

'It came this morning, with another letter from that woman,' she murmured.

I think she began to feel ashamed of herself, and in two minutes I got the letter also from her. It was written by the same hand as the letter of the day before, and was, like it, unsigned. Its purport was merely that the writer, in proof of her good faith, enclosed a photograph which Master Jim—that gay Lothario! if the lady was to be believed—had given her. We were still looking at the letter, when the Colonel came in. I explained the matter to him, and I will answer for it, before he at all understood it, Kitty was more ashamed of herself than ever.

'This photograph and the one at Gold's are facsimiles,' said he thoughtfully. 'That is certain. And both come from Frome. My conclusion is that the gentleman who obtained Jim's photograph for his own purpose last year—to send to Gold, I mean—printed off more than one copy; and having this one by him, and wishing for some reason to cause mischief between Kitty and Jim, he thought of this and used it. The sender is, therefore, someone who passed his examination last year and is still at Frome.'

Jim shook his head.

'If he passed, sir, he would not be at Bulcher's now,' he said.

'On second thoughts he may not be,' replied the Colonel. 'He may have sent the two letters to Frome to some confidential friend with orders to post them. Wait—wait a minute,' my old chum added, looking at me with a sudden light in his keen eyes. 'Where have I seen a letter addressed to Frome—within the last day or two? Eh? Wait a bit.'

We did wait; and presently the Colonel announced his discovery in a voice of grim triumph.

'I have it,' he said. 'It is that scoundrel, Farquhar!'

'Farquhar!' I said. 'What do you mean, Colonel?'

'Just that, Major. Do you remember him knocking against you in the hall at the club the day before yesterday? He dropped a letter, and I picked it up. It was addressed—I could not help seeing so much—to Frome.'

'Well,' said Jim slowly, 'he was at Bulcher's, and he passed last year. And I remember now that no one else from Bulcher's went up at the same examination.'

'And the letter,' continued the Colonel in his turn, 'was in a large envelope—one that would contain a cabinet photograph.'

There was a dead silence in the room. Kitty's face was hidden. Jim moved at last—towards her? No, towards the door. He had his hand on it when the Colonel observed him.

'Stop!' he said sharply. 'Come back, my boy. None of that. The Major and I will deal with him.'

Jim still lingered.

'Well, sir,' he said, 'I will only——'

'Come back!' roared the Colonel, imperiously, but with the most gracious smile in his eyes as he looked at his boy. 'You will stop here, you lucky dog, you. And I hope this will be a lesson to you not to give your photograph to young ladies at Frome.'

If Kitty squirmed a little in her chair at that, well she deserved it. I said before that a woman's faith is a wonderful thing. But when there is another woman in the case—umph!

'Mr. Farquhar, sir? Yes sir, he is in the house,' said the club porter, turning in his glass case to consult his book. 'I believe he went upstairs to the drawing room, sir.'

'Thank you,' the Colonel replied, and he glanced at me and I at him; and then, fixing our hats on tightly, and grasping our sticks, we went upstairs.

We were in luck, as it turned out, for not only was Farquhar in the drawing-room, but there was no one else in the long, stiff, splendid room. He looked up from his writing, and saw us piloting our way towards him between the chairs and tables, and I think he turned green. At any rate, my last doubt left me at sight of his conscience-stricken face.

'A word with you, Mr. Farquhar,' said the Colonel grimly, keeping a tight hand on my arm, for I confess I had been in favour of more drastic measures. 'It is about a photograph.'

'A photograph?' said the startled wretch, his mouth ajar.

'Well, perhaps I should have said two photographs,' replied the Colonel gravely; 'photographs of my son which are lying, one in the possession of Major Bratton, and one in the album of a certain friend of yours, Mr. Isaac Gold.'

He tried to frame the words, 'A friend of mine!' and to feign astonishment and stare us down; but it was a pitiable attempt, and his eyes sank. He could only mutter, 'I do not know him. There is some mistake.'

'Perhaps so,' said the Colonel smoothly. 'I hope there is

some mistake. But let me tell you this, Mr. Farquhar. Unless you apply within a week for leave to resign your commission in Her Majesty's service, I shall lay certain facts concerning these photographs before the Commander-in-Chief and before the mess of your regiment. You understand me, I think? Very well. That is all I wish to say to you.'

Apparently he had nothing to say to us in return, and we were both glad, I think, to turn our backs on that baffled, spiteful face, in which the horror of discovery strove with the fear of ruin. It is ill striking a man when he is down, and I was glad to get out of the house and breathe a purer air.

We had no need to go to the Commander-in-Chief. Lieutenant Farquhar applied for leave to resign within the week, and Her Majesty obtained, I think, a better bargain in Private Isaac Gold, who, following the Colonel's advice, enlisted about this time. He is already a corporal, and, aided by an education rare in the ranks, bids fair to earn a sergeant's stripes at an early date. He has turned over a new leaf—the Colonel always maintained that he had a keen sense of honour; and I feel little doubt that if he ever has the luck to rise to Farquhar's grade, and bear the Queen's commission, he will be a credit to it and to his friend and brother officer—the Colonel's boy. Not, mind you, that I think he will ever be as good a fellow as Jim! No, no.

